



勇者パーティーに

かわい子だったので

告白してみた。

1
水樹 すいせい
イラスト La-na

Yuusha Party no Kawaii Ko ga Ita no de, Kokuhaku Shite

vol.1

by Suisei

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Chapter 1: I tried to confess

"Now I've gone and done it..."

I muttered in a large featureless room.

I had been reincarnated as a demon.

I was originally a human named Segawa Youki.

I was given a cheat-like power upon my reincarnation.

However I was not reborn a hero, instead I am a demon.

At some point during the fight, I got too into my role as a mini-boss and went into full blown [Chuunibyou*](#) mode, overacting with passionate haughty pride as an evil villain the likes of which you'd find in cartoon shows and games.

Now before me laid the defeated Hero Party.

The Hero was taken out with my Chuuni-magic, the mage ruthlessly knocked about, the swordsman squashed with spells, and the uninjured but unconscious cleric all laid there.

"And they only made it halfway through the Demon Castle."

This room was the midpoint of the castle, after this there were still rooms with the higher ranked officers and then the Demon Lord himself.

I scratched my head as I thought about what I should do.

If the Hero doesn't defeat the Demon Lord the world will never be at peace.

If the Hero Party is wiped out in the middle of the castle, surely the world would fall into chaos.

"I suppose for now I should dump them in the nearby village to recover."

As a former human I knew it would be bad if the world couldn't achieve peace.

But I didn't really have a good reason for abandoning my post.

I seized this opportunity to heal up the Hero Party.

Guess I'll start with the Hero. *"Take this, Holy Sword Excalibur!"*

He yelled that Chuuni-like phrase as he swung his shining sword at me, and I responded in kind with my own Chuuni spell.

I got overexcited.

After finishing with the Hero, it was the mage girl's turn.

Even before the battle she was batting eyelashes at the Hero. I felt she was kind of a bitch so I relentlessly attacked her.

I don't discriminate between genders.

Third up is the swordsman. He came off as the cool silent type and didn't lose to the Hero in terms of awesomeness.

It kinda pissed me off so as soon as the battle started I made him disappear with 《Dark Magic: Vanish Wave》.

When I say 'disappear', I meant he *literally* became invisible. While the Hero and Mage were stunned by finding themselves alone I took that opening to take them out.

"Now last one up...is..."

The cleric girl.

When the swordsman disappeared she wasn't fazed and kept her eyes on me from a distance.

She used good judgement and didn't let her guard down, so after I took out the swordsman I got her from behind with a sleeper hold until she lost consciousness.

"She doesn't have any physical wounds, so I guess she doesn't need any healing...wait..."

Still, just in case, since she's lying face down, I should roll her over and just make sure...

"...This is bad, she's right in my strike zone."

There lay a beautiful girl who was perfectly my type.



"Hmm, should I take her as a prisoner of war? ...But if I do that she'll probably be upset. And as a former Japanese citizen, prisoners and slaves are a little out of my comfort zone."

I was just a mini-boss and still had to answer to the Demon Lord and other superior officers too.

Well, if it came down to a fight I would win, but...

"Aaaa...farewell my angel..."

I ordered my underlings to take the Hero Party to the nearest village.

I watched with regret as they carried her away.

Three days later...

"Come at me! ...You...umm..."

Looks like they didn't bother to remember the name of a mini-boss.

If you want a rematch at least gather some intelligence on your enemy.

"Mwahahahaha! You came even though it's hopeless, Heroes. An officer in the Demon Lord's army, under Zekiel-sama's command, I am the Dark Knight Corps 5th Squad Executive Officer Youki, and I will send you back to hell!"

I was in full blown Chuuni-mode putting together all my low-ranked positions for my self-introduction.

"Aah, I see...so that was your name. Prepare yourself, Youki!"

The Hero Party readied for battle.

In the midst of the fighting off the heroes I kept glancing over to the cleric girl. We finally made eye contact and she glared at me.

"Stop taking me lightly, Youki!"

The Hero caught me looking away and wanted me to focus on the fight instead.

"Ah, sorry sorry. You have my full attention now."

As I thought, it was a bad idea to use the Max Level Dark Magic: Endless Dark.

The result, obliteration.

Total party wipeout.

"...And, I've done it again..."

I looked over at the cleric girl.

Should I have put up a magic barrier around her?

Looks like she was knocked out with just a couple light wounds.

"Thank goodness."

After being relieved I set to work healing her with magic.

Feeling charitable I healed the rest of the party too. Soon after I order my underlings to take them back to the nearby village again.

For a month after that, the Hero Party kept returning and the battle endlessly repeated itself.

On top of that, the Demon Lord and other higher-ups started thinking the Hero Party must be weak.

The Hero Party was by no means weak.

I just exceeded the norm by a huge margin.

Likely if I wasn't here the Hero Party would wipe the floor with the Superior Officers and the Demon Lord.

That's just how powerful they were.

These days I was starting to think it was my fault the world would never be at peace.

I was thinking about that as I laid sprawled out on the floor of my room.

The Hero Party would be here soon, should I just let them through?

"But man that girl is so fine — When I watch her during the fights she's pretty attentive to her teammates. And it feels like she has such a pleasant disposition. ...Maybe I'll give the next battle a try after all."

I made up my mind.

A few days later...

"Today is the day we'll bring you to your knees, Youki!"

The Hero Party finally made it here.

And Hero-kun finally remembered my name.

For about a month if I didn't give a self-introduction he would yell everything *but* my name.

"Yuuga, let's hurry and defeat this boring looking demon."

So the Hero's name is Yuuga, is it?

The ones being defeated in a hurry is you lot.

And that boring comment was going too far, you Mage bitch.

"..."

The swordsman drew his blade in silence and pointed it in my direction. Forget about playing the cool, silent type, just say something will you?

"Let's give it all we've got everyone!"

...I gotta make sure I look my best. I can't let her see me looking shabby. After double checking myself I say the lines I've been using for the last month.

"Mwahahahaha! You came again even though it's hopeless, Heroes. An officer in the Demon Lord's army, under Zekiel-sama's command, I am the Dark Knight Corps 5th Squad Executive Officer Youki, and I will send you back to hell!"

...Lately I've been so embarrassed I could die.

Though the Hero Party hasn't realized it yet.

They readied themselves for another battle.

Well, since I have my cheat there's no way I could lose, and little by little the Hero Party weakens.

After letting the battle go on just long enough I seize the perfect moment and propose a deal to them.

"Heroes! Surely you've realized it by now? You can never win against me."

For the past month they've been coming to the Demon Castle and been repeatedly defeated.

Ever so slightly they're coming to realize.

By themselves, they cannot win against this demon.

"...So what?! For the suffering masses, and for my friends who believe in me, I cannot lose to the likes of you!"

Even though he knows, he can't afford to back down.

That's why he had to say that.

Still, the Hero Party is looking worse for the wear.

If we were to continue, the fight would end up as it always has with a total party wipeout.

"All the more reason to strike a deal. If you agree to my terms, I shall let you pass."

The Hero Party stopped in their tracks and looked at me.

I was embarrassed because *she* was looking at me too, but made sure not to show it on my face.

"...What do you want?"

And I answer,

"Leave that girl here. If you do that, the rest of you may continue on."

I pointed towards the cleric girl.

After I finished, the party's reactions were mixed.

The Hero was angry and yelling, the swordsman was weighing the options, the mage was probably thinking she'd have one less rival, and couldn't quite contain her laughter.

And, the girl in question was looking resigned.

"Don't screw with me! There's no way we could do that! Cecilia is one of our precious comrades."

"You really wanna do that? Then the deal is off. Once again you'll start over in the nearby village. In that time how many more humans will be attacked by demons? Who knows just what I'll do..."

No really, what *would* I do? After all I haven't been given a mission to attack that village even once.

"Yuuga, let's take the deal."

As expected of the Mage bitch. Can't pass up a chance to get rid of your rival.

"Mikana?! What are you saying..."

"That demon, he may have a plain face, but his power is monstrous. It's vexing, but we can't win against him no matter how many times we try. And now that very opponent is gonna let us by with such a sweet deal. And Cecilia is strong, she won't be taken down so easily. We'll go defeat the other demons and the Demon Lord and come right back here, so there's nothing to worry about."

That bitch of a Mage was spouting shit like 'Let's believe in our friends' to make the hero take the bait.

You know if the tables were turned and *she* was the one being sacrificed she'd kick up a huge fuss.

The swordsman watched the proceedings silently, waiting for the outcome.

Even in this situation he wouldn't break character.

The Mage bitch continued to persuade her team for the next few minutes, and the result was...

"...Fine.

We'll....leave Cecilia here."

Looks like the deal is sealed.

It was a bitter decision.

He was so frustrated with himself his nails drew blood in his clenched hands.

"Heeeh, then you may pass."

I opened the door for the party that had dwindled down to three members. The hero kept glancing back at the cleric, wordlessly promising to return for her. Once they were through I shut the door.

Now it was just us. I started to get butterflies in my stomach.

"...Even though I know there's no chance of winning, I'll never give up. My power may not be able to even scratch you, but I will struggle 'til my last breath!"

She readied her staff and let loose the intermediate-level Light spell 'Holy Laser'.

"..Hey, hold up a minute! Time out, time out!"

I didn't really want to start a fight with her.

I cancelled out her magic and tried to appeal to her while holding up my hands.

"...What are you plotting? A trick to get me to lower my guard? Even without such a cheap trick you could easily kill me."

"No, you're mistaken. I swear!"

I only-

"Then what do you want? Making them leave the Healer behind, surely you plan to trap them ahead and whittle them down to nothing!"

I wouldn't do something dumb like that.

"If I was gonna kill you I would have done it already!

I have business with you."

I just-

"Then you plan to kill only me?"

"I fell in love with you at first sight. Please go out with me!"

-wanted to confess.

"What?!"

I felt relieved to finally say it.

On the other hand, she was left dumbfounded by this turn of events.

***Chuunibyou** - You'll find many times in this novel that Youki goes into his "Chuunibyou" mode (sometimes shortened to Chuuni or Chuu2). For those of you unfamiliar with this term, here is a short explanation (as it pertains to this novel).

Chuunibyou literally translates to 8th grader syndrome (or 2nd year of middle school syndrome), and indicates children around age 12-13 that act out crazy delusional fantasies as though they were real. It's like playing make believe to make yourself seem strange, special, mysterious, and the like. While it's mildly expected of middle schoolers, as you get older you're supposed to grow out of it, so those that continue to 'suffer' from it are often looked down upon and found embarrassing (even Youki gets embarrassed of his own Chuuni actions). Being in a fantasy world where demons, heroes, and magic are real, Youki sometimes can't help but act the part of the nefarious evil villain, or the love-struck romanticist, saying and doing things to fulfill his preconceived notions of how these roles should be played out. When he does return to reality soon after he realizes just how silly he was being, but still can't help it.

Some anime that deal with Chuunibyou are "Chuunibyou demo Koi ga Shitai!" (Love, Chunibyo & Other Delusions), and Inou-Battle wa Nichijou-kei no Naka de (When Supernatural Battles Became Commonplace) if you want to see it acted out.

For a more in depth explanation of *Chuunibyou*, [check out this article](#). (Youki is the "Evil Eye"-type Chuuni mentioned here)

Chapter 2 (part 1): I tried to die honorably

Let's start from the conclusion. I was rejected. It was over with a single word — 'No'.

This is a room in the middle of the Demon Castle.

Indeed, this is the room I, the reincarnated Segawa Youki (now just Youki), guard.

Just what was I doing in the middle of this room?

"...Rejected. It's over. I wanna die..."

I was hunched over, hugging my knees and drawing letters on the floor.

Including failures from my previous life, just how many times have I been turned down?

"Um...excuse me..."

Next to me was a flustered girl in cleric clothes, whose name I heard to be Cecilia.

"...hahaha..."

The laughter just started welling up.

Humans get rejected so many times over the course of their lives.

When I was human, I was also rejected a lot.

That's why I was feeling the way I am now.

"Excuse me, are you all right?Wait, what am I doing, he's the enemy!"

I thought she was cheering me up, but she suddenly readied herself for battle again.

She's so kind. Her awkward kindness felt bittersweet..

I almost forgot that she sees me as her enemy.

Why is that?

It's because I'm a demon.

I hope I'm reborn as a human next time.

If I was human...would my boring face still make it hopeless?

She pointed her staff at me.

Looks like she's ready to take me down.

I can die happy if it's at my beloved's hands.

There's nothing left for me in this world anyway.

"《Judgement Cross》"

A pillar of light in the shape of a holy cross came at me.

A senior level light-type magic.

Even with my cheat, if I don't put up any resistance, I'll probably die.

"Aah, please let me be reborn as a human next time."

I closed my eyes in prayer.

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.....?

No matter how long I waited, the impact never came, so I hesitantly opened my eyes.

The magic she used was gone. Did she cancel her magic because I didn't do anything?

"Haah..."

But the burden on your body is huge if you forcibly cancel it. It was evident she had done just that as she was collapsed on her knees and breathing heavily.

"...Why didn't you resist? After a month of battling you I've come to understand some of the extent of your power. You should have easily dodged or countered that level of magic!"

She recovered from the backlash and asked me that.

The answer is quite simple.

"Since you turned down my confession, I felt like dying."

"Don't toy with me!"

Even when angry she's still cute...Er, I mean...I thought it best to give her a candid answer.

"I have nothing left to live for. I've lived my whole life in this room you know? If I went outside I'd have to attack human towns for no reason at all, and because I didn't want to do that, I never left..."

I still had all my memories of my previous life in tact, so I was immensely reluctant to do things like that to humans.

"...I've never met a demon like you before. All the demons I've ever seen were ruthless and cruel, treating humans like garbage."

Seems like what I said was pretty strange.

As she said, most demons act like that.

However, I was an exception.

"That's 'cause I was originally human."

Nothing I said was untrue.

"Wha-? Do you mean to tell me there's some dark magic out there that can change humans into demons?"

Her eyes were open wide in shock.

She seems to have misunderstood what I meant.

There is no such magic.

Even with my cheat I couldn't do that.

"Ah, no no! I'm a human who was reincarnated. In my previous life I was a human."

Suddenly she stared at my coldly.

Even I could tell she was thinking 'What is this guy talking about?'

"...Wh-what? It's true! I was born on Earth as Segawa Youki. I died in a traffic accident."

She probably wouldn't understand things like 'Earth' and 'traffic accident', but I still did my best to convince her I had died once before.

"...I don't believe you. But suppose it were true, then why *did* you ally yourself with the Demon Lord? Would it not have been better to ally yourself with us humans?"

"Of course I wanted to, but say I did, would the Hero or anyone else in the party seriously believe a demon like me would ally with humans?"

Would a group of justice freaks really take the time to listen to a word I say? No, they'd just see me as a strong looking demon and immediately categorize me as an enemy. That's what the Hero would do, obviously the Mage bitch too, and of course the Swordsman would be no exception.

I can't see us becoming friends. Even if I did somehow befriend the cleric, there was still the pretty boy Hero, bitchy Mage, and taciturn Swordsman to deal with. There's no way they'd let me in their party.

Even if she understood where I was coming from, she kept quiet about it.

"Still, Hero-kun and the others are powerful enough to defeat the Demon Lord."

He is a Hero after all.

The Swordsman and Mage are the real deal too, so they should be fine.

"...Wouldn't it have been faster to kill the Demon Lord yourself?"

"Nuh-uh, not happening. In human terms, if a soldier killed the king, what do you think would happen?"

I propose the question to her.

"...At worst, they'd be executed; if they managed to escape, they'd be a wanted criminal."

"It's not like that with demons. You defeat the Demon Lord, you're more likely to be crowned the next Demon Lord. That's not for me."

It'd be a little weird because of my low rank, but if I did become the Demon Lord then I would be fated to be taken down. Beyond other demons, sooner or later humans would come to defeat me as well.

"I say I'm protecting this room, but it's more that I'm a shut-in, and it's been quite boring."

And then the Hero Party appeared.

"I was honestly gonna let you guys defeat me when you came, but I ruined any chance of that when I got too excited and was overcome by my old Chuunibyou..."

And proceeded to wipe the floor with them.

"I figured the world would be in trouble if I left things like that, so I decided to heal you up and send you to that nearby village. And then when I saw you it was love at first sight..."

"I...see."

"I watched you for that whole month we fought. But then I realized that at this rate world peace would be impossible. I thought that I shouldn't hold you back in this room anymore, so today I made up my mind to confess."

Sadly I ended up trying to die honorably.

"The Hero Party will defeat the Demon Lord. Then I'll lose my home. You turned me down too. That's why there's nothing left for me."

My time being reincarnated as a Demon was at an end.

The room fell silent.

After a few moments, she slowly opened her mouth.

"...That's unacceptable. You have great power. So much so that our Hero Party wasn't a match for you. Please, won't you use that power for us humans?"

She suddenly started giving a speech.

"...For starters, you have enough power that you can disguise yourself as a human, don't you? If you do, you should be able to meld into human society seamlessly."

How did this turn of events come about?

Even though I wasn't quite following what she was saying, she continued.

"So...Come with me to the outside world."



She reached her hand out to me.

Apparently it was time for me to graduate from being a shut-in.

That day, the Demon Lord was defeated and peace returned.

Chapter 2 (part 2): I tried joining a guild

The news of the Demon Lord's defeat at the hands of the heroes spread, and the world rejoiced.

Every town, village, and country held celebrations in honor of the heroes.

Of course, the imperial city Minerva in the Clariness Kingdom that had selected the heroes held a grand parade in their honor.

So, during that joyous event, I went to the Guild.

It was a considerably sturdy looking two-story building.

That day, Cecilia ended my days of being a shut-in, and I stealthily left the castle.

The heroes were successfully convinced that I had kicked the bucket.

I used the map Cecilia gave me, and finally arrived in the imperial city, Minerva.

"I left first, so just how did the Hero Party get here ahead of me?"

I was surprised to see the principal members of Hero Party already here.

And of course, Cecilia was with them.

"Did I get lost somehow? ...I suppose that path I took was pretty roundabout, so it's highly likely."

Actually, on my way here I saw cat-eared, dog-eared, and all sorts of other animal-eared people along with some beautiful elves that ignited my passion for fantasy.

So I may have unknowingly taken a slight detour.

But, I still made it to Minerva in one piece, so I won't dwell on it.

While thinking about that, I enter the classic RPG world guild hall.

Inside, there was even a wet bar.

It was about noon, so I didn't see anyone drinking yet, but there were people eating a meal here and there.

Since I wasn't hungry, I went straight to the reception desk.

"Excuse Mee~, I'd like to join the guild..."

No one was at the reception desk so I tried calling out for someone.

A male worker came out from the back when I did..

"Huh? The festival's parade is today—I was sure no one would come..."

He lazily walked in while scratching his unkempt hair..

His eyes looked like the ones on a dead fish...is this guy okay?

And isn't the receptionist supposed to be a pretty Lady?

...Well, I didn't come to the guild just to see pretty ladies, so whatever.

"I'd like to join the guild..."

He may not have heard me the first time, so I repeated myself.

The male receptionist scratched his head again, and apathetically replied, "Ya wanna join? Nearly all the staff are on vacation today...now where was it?"

There was certainly a lot of paperwork on the desk, and he was randomly searching for the right one.

Hey hey...is this guy *really* okay?

"Fer cryin' out loud, they all say they wanna see the Hero and fuck off...ah, what a pain in the ass."

Don't swear in front of your customers! Though I understand the staff who suddenly took time off are also at fault.

But really, why was this guy the only one left?

All things considered, they should have at least left one more person here besides this guy.

He kept bitching about his co-workers while looking for the paper, then finally found it.

"Ah, here it is. Fill out the required information here. Well, I say fill out, but it's just your name, age, and the exclusion clause that we're not liable if you die on the job."

He handed me the paper while giving me instructions, and I filled out all the required parts.

"Name, Youki. Age, 21. Gotcha. Here's your guild card."

He said ambiguously, and gave me a square pocket-sized guild card.

"It'll cost you to replace it, so be careful not to lose it—at least for the next three days...I don't wanna be the one to go through that irritating procedure."

Seems like the rest of the staff are off for the next three days.

Do you really hate work that much?

There's no limit to your laziness.

"Right...understood."

I left my reply at that.

...Anyway, I'm not gonna lose it...probably.

"Then we're done here. You'll start off at the lowest F-rank and work your way up from there. Take your time and give it your best. ...No wait, give it your best in three days. Do that, and it'll save me a shitton of work I don't wanna do like processings quests and other bullshit."

How lazy can a guy get?!

I totally ignored what he said and went out to complete a bunch of different quests.

He said it was a pain, but whatever.

I took the gold I earned from my quests, got a bed at an inn, flopped myself down on it and thought about what I should do from here on out.

I chose an inn near the guild that wasn't too expensive. Although cheap, the food I got was delicious, so I figure I made a good choice.

(If I keep on like this, my rank will increase, as well as my earnings. And once my livelihood reaches a certain point...I'll confess to Cecilia once again.) I haven't given up just yet.

I'm living the dream of being reincarnated into a fantasy world with a cheat-level power, but since I was a demon, I had hidden myself away in the Demon Castle.

I can't give up after my Goddess Cecilia showed me the way.

(Heh heh heh...I'll definitely win her love.) I got excited thinking about Cecilia, and after getting into Chuuni-mode, I wasn't able to go to sleep for a while.

Chapter 3 (part 1): I tried being invited

I've been in the guild for a week.

I did well on quests, and even rose to rank D.

As usual, I came to the guild to report my finished quest.

"Hey, the pretty Ladies are over there ya'nno? That's why everyone's getting their requests processed over there. Why the hell are you bothering to come over here?"

He asked me with obvious irritation.

I wondered the same thing.

"Well, when I first came here I was expecting something like a pretty Lady at the reception desk. But, I dunno, I just got used to Clayman as my receptionist."

"Got used to' my ass! You're increasing the shit I have to do!"

His voice echoed throughout the Guild.

Clayman was the staff member that processed my registration when I first came to the Guild.

3 days after I registered, the other staff returned, but I still had him process my quests.

Since it's Clayman, despite his complaining he still did his job properly.

"Even so, it doesn't matter, work is work. Quit your complaining."

There's no good reason not to come to him.

"No, this wasn't my job in the first place. The only reason I was there was because the rest of the staff took time off on the day of the Hero Parade." He continued to complain while processing the oh-so-annoying quest.

And so, as he bitched about work while still doing it properly, and me throwing in some side commentary, there was a sudden commotion at

the Guild entrance.

“Huh? Did something happen?”

Clayman leaned over his desk to get a look at the entrance, and I also looked back to see the cause of the commotion.

“Excuse me, could you let me through please?”

My Goddess Cecilia is here. All around you could hear people asking what the hero Cecilia—*sama* was doing in a place like this.

The general mood was similar to an Idol's concert from my previous life.

Even Clayman, the ever troublesome guy who always did things at his own pace, is a little taken aback.

She slowly made her towards me.

"Forgive me for not contacting you sooner."

I and the guild members in my vicinity turned to stone seeing her lowering her head to apologize.

Only Clayman remained unfazed, his eyes languid as always as he watched the event unfold.

“Let’s discuss this further in my home.”

With a 'let us depart', she took the hand of my stone-like self.

And just like that she led me out of the guild.

After we left the guild was in an uproar, gossiping up a storm.

Upon exiting, we hopped into the carriage she came in. The coachman eyed me suspiciously, but lowered his head after Cecilia explained.

This is the first time I've experienced the bumpy ride of a horse-drawn carriage.

"I had really intended to meet with you sooner, however between the Parade and the Parties it seems time managed to slip away from me..."

She apologizes and lowers her head again. It wasn't like I wanted her to apologize, but...

"Well, it was my first time outside the castle, and at long last I got to enjoy everyday life in another world. So I don't really mind at all!"

"...Well I'm glad you think of it that way."

Somehow, she still seemed down so I changed the topic.

"Come to think of it, I'm impressed you were able to find me."

"...At first I wondered what I would do. I had no idea what your disguised form looked like. And so I looked into guilds around here with recent new members."

I see, that probably took a lot of effort.

"...Still I was able to locate you sooner than expected."

W-what's this?

"You did not change your name, even your appearance isn't that different...just what were you thinking?"

"What are you talking about? I totally changed!"

When I was with the demons I already didn't look like much of one, I had the boring face of a human.

If I had to name a problem, it would likely be the splendid horns on my forehead and black wings growing out of my back.

"I put up with the pain, broke off my horns, and even removed my wings."

I could grow them back if I wanted, however I have no intention to do so at the moment.

"...Be that as it may, my hero party knows your face. At the very least please wear some glasses."

Like that, in the middle of our discussion on my disguise, the carriage suddenly stopped.

We appeared to have reached our destination, and at the coachman's proclamation we exited the carriage.

“...Geez, it’s huge.”

In front of me stood a large mansion. In front of the gate were two soldier-like people.

After exiting the carriage with Cecilia, I followed to enter the mansion but was stopped by the guards.

"My lady, welcome home...who exactly is this man?"

The guards had me at spear point. Hey now, are we really doing this?

"Lower your spears at once! He is my dear friend."

They put down their spears. There was still some uneasiness, but they would not defy Cecilia.

I could feel the guards staring daggers at me while I accompanied Cecilia inside her mansion.

Chapter 3 (part 2): I tried to step forward

“Could you please leave the guild?”

“What!?”

That’s strange. What kind of situation is this?

I was invited to the mansion Cecilia lives in, and now we're in her room.

We both sat on the bed in a room that had the cleanliness you'd expect of a woman.

“...Forgive me. That was an insufficient explanation .”

I think that's more than just 'insufficient'. I wonder why exactly she wants me to leave the guild?

"The Demon Lord has now been vanquished by the Hero. However, the danger of all the demons still remains."

Well, I guess that’s true.

That's why I work in the guild, to diminish the damage of the demons.

But she continues,

"...Yet the danger is not limited to demons. There's likely to be conflict between humans now."

Sounds like war. You'd think after killing the Demon Lord there'd be a little bit of peace.

Even though it's a fantasy world, war still exists between humans.

"In particular, there's rumors that the Gallis Empire, a militarized nation, has already begun preparing weapons."

"But what does that have to do with me?"

“Even in the Clariness Kingdom, each country has begun amassing the most talented people. Already, there's a mountain of engagement talks for the Hero from every nation's princesses and young noble ladies.”

As expected of Hero-*kun*.

Rather than politics, it appears he's drowning in fervent pursuers.

"It's not only the Hero, the rest of the party has also received such proposals."

I just heard something I really didn't need to hear.

"They're even coming in for you?!"

I leaned in and pressed her for an answer.

"Of course, I've received some...but I've refused them. ...And, don't interrupt when I'm in the middle of talking."

I returned to my original position after being relieved.

"So what I was trying to say was, there's a good possibility that if you become famous now the other nations will want to recruit you as well."

"Then what exactly do you want me to do?"

If I temporarily leave the guild, what am I supposed to do with myself?

"And therefore, I'd like to personally hire you, and compensate you with payment."

If that's the case, then my renown would certainly be less than if I worked at the guild.

"...Are you sure you can afford that much?"

A noble lady though she may be, there must be a limit to the amount of money she can spare.

"You are undoubtedly strong, and I'm sure you would achieve no less than an S-rank in your guild. Honestly, there's no way I could afford someone so superior by myself."

Well, I wouldn't mind if she took advantage of my love for her to hire me cheaply,

However, she's the type that would hate that sort of thing.

"I am aware that you harbor feelings for me. That's why...don't..."

She hugged her body inward with a sad look on her face...I see where this is going...

“Don’t say anything else!”

I stopped guessing what she was trying to say. I spoke with zeal in a firm tone.

"I want my love for you be fulfilled, but not like this! ...Bwahahaha, you forget, I have my cheat. Assassins and spies from other countries are no match for me. Being seduced is out of the question. The only one for me is you!"

Halfway through in my excitement I started into my *chuunibyou* act. So at the end I struck a pose. Around the time my mind froze, her essential reaction was...

“...*snicker*”

She tried to stop herself from laughing.

However she couldn’t handle it and busted a gut.

"....Ahahahahahaaa, I'm sorry...I couldn't take it anymore. Pahaha..."

And so she just kept laughing. As time went by she settled down and caught her breath.

"...Haaa, my apologies, I didn't expect such a reply and was laughing before I knew it."

“ No no, I got too passionate and it looks like I said some outrageous things.”

I desperately explained myself. Apparently that was funny too and enticed a bit more laughter from her.

When the laughter settled down again, for some reason she spoke in a low whisper.

"More and more I'm starting to believe your story that you're not a demon. No other demon could be so funny."

"Eh?! You still didn't believe me? ...And why the whispering?"

I was shocked.

I was under the impression she believed me about my death.

"Oh no, I guess you could say I was double checking. As for the whispering, I think you'll understand soon. That reminds me...lets talk a little more. It's just a small personal request."

...Could it be I've missed a lucky chance?

Just like that, this snickering and laughing girl steeled herself as she looked at me.

So she and the resurrected me had a chat.

Time passed, and because she had plans after this it was time to leave.

"I had fun today. Let's meet again, ok? I'll contact you."

"I had fun too. Also, before I go I have one last request..."

My face was hot. Should I do this? Won't she turn me down?

"What is it?"

With grim determination I said,

"Would it be alright if I call you just Cecilia from now on?"

I went and said it.

After I finished my face got hot.

I'm sure it was burning bright red right about now. A small smile alighted her face.

"That's fine. And I shall call you Youki—*san*."

Hell yeeaaah!

In my heart I had a little victory dance.

"Well then, once again, I'll see you soon, Youki—*san*."

"See ya, Cecilia."

I made my way out of her mansion.

Now, I laid down on an a bed at the Inn, but couldn't stop grinning.

I feel like my relationship with Cecilia took a step forward. What a day. By the way, although inconsequential, the next day when I went to the guild I was shoved around and bombarded with questions.

Chapter 4 (part 1): I tried making a friend

The sky is vibrant blue, and the wind is blowing just right.

Even the temperature's in that perfect sweet spot between hot and cold.

As such, the weather proved it's the ideal time to meet Cecilia at her mansion for our planned rendezvous.

"Man, the weather is so nice today~ I even get to meet with Cecilia, today's gonna be a great day off!"

I'm in such high spirits, that I'm skipping all the way there.

Everything is fine up until that moment.

The problem stood in front of Cecilia's mansion.

"...Wha? I can't go in?! Why not? I know I made an appointment."

Arriving at the mansion, I was stopped by the same two guards as last time. What's more, they're staring daggers at me again.

"Right now M'Lady is having a meeting with the Hero. What's more, we simply don't trust you. Now take your leave!"

What are they talking about?

So the Hero came or whatever, I'm the one who made an appointment!

"If that's the case, at least let me wait until they're done."

To get here I had to walk what would have taken a carriage 10 minutes.

No way I'm leaving until I see Cecilia.

"...Enough! If you don't leave now, I'll..."

Saying that, the guard came at me with his spear.

Hey now, is this guy right in the head?

Frankly, I could take these guys out in 3 seconds flat, but I'm convinced that would only make things worse.

It would also cause problems for Cecilia.

"Tch, fine, I got it! I'll leave!"

I clicked my tongue at them, and went back the way I came.

From behind I hear them saying something about never letting me see Cecilia again. It made me angry, but I endured it as I left the mansion.

"Aah, damn it, that makes me mad."

I'm in the worst possible mood.

The previously happy mood is nowhere to be found.

"Assholes, I'll remember this next time!"

I kicked the ground as I cursed them.

Today is supposed to be my day off so I didn't feel like going to the guild either.

It couldn't be helped so I wandered around the town all by my lonesome.

Wandering about, I saw a crowd gathering.

As I compared it to the paparazzi from my previous life. I took a look at the center of the spectacle.

As I did...

(What's this? I feel like I've seen him somewhere before. That face...) It was a pretty boy at the center. He had a sword at his hip, a sharp gaze, and gave off a 'cool' impression.

(Ah. I remember. He was the Hero Party's Swordsman—*kun*.) Hero—*kun* is a refreshing kind of pretty boy, but Swordsman—*kun* is a pretty boy with an imposing air about him. But now he looked both troubled and confused.

(In a way, I'm starting to feel bad for him) Perhaps it's because I was also feeling unfortunate today that I went to help him.

(Can't be helped, I guess I'll give him a hand.) I pointed my finger away from the swordsman and yelled, "Oh look, there's the Hero!"

Or so I said.

Then, there were shrieks of 'Kyaa' and 'Hero—*sama*' as they took off to the direction I pointed to.

Just as I thought, Hero—*kun* is more popular.

"Ha, piece of cake."

It went so perfectly according to plan, I had to laugh.

Looking back, with everyone gone you wouldn't have believed there'd been such a huge crowd earlier. Unable to grasp the situation, the swordsman of the Hero Party looked flabbergasted.

"Y'know, you should use this chance to escape."

I pulled him along by the arm and took him to a less prominent area.

"Phew...We should be ok around here."

We went to an alleyway a bit away from the previous spot.

It was a dim and ominous place, but I doubt anyone else would come here.

"..."

Hey hey, even now you're gonna act like the cool guy?

Well, it's not like I'm expecting to get thanked for saving him or anything.

"Bye then. Next time wear a disguise when you walk around town."

And so I left.

Perhaps I was a bit too cocky?

Well, I saved him, and gave him some advice, so we'll call it even.

Thinking about that I set out to wander again by my lonesome, however...

“Wa...wait a minute!”

“...Huh?”

Suddenly, I heard a strange voice.

It was nothing more than a voice calling out.

The problem lied in that it sounded like a voice that belonged to a professionally acted anime character from my previous life.

But here, in this deserted alleyway, there was only me and Swordsman—*kun*.

...So that means.

"So the person that spoke just now was..."

He is timidly poking his fingers together and after a moment he nods.

... No wait, something's wrong here!!

This cool and handsome guy actually spoke with an anime-like voice?

"...let me get this straight, that voice is the reason you hardly ever say a word?"

“...yeah.”

That's an affirmative.

I see, no doubt he's developed a complex about it.

He tried to hide it so no one would find out.



"Well, everyone has something about themselves they don't want broadcasted to the world. Even I have something like that."

"...You're not gonna make fun of my voice?"

"It's not like it's your fault. Plus, I have plenty of things about myself that I don't like. There's not a person out there that has no faults."

And of course in my case it's that I'm from the demon race.

It's a complex that won't go away and can't be cured.

"...You're a weird guy. Usually when people first hear my voice, they would make fun of me or laugh at me."

Seems like he had a rough time because of that voice.

So that's why he became the cool, silent type.

"I won't laugh. I've even seen other guys with a voice like that. "

Only on TV though.

"...I see."

A little smile appeared on his face.

I guess he was just glad I didn't make fun of him.

I thought it over, and I was speaking to him casually like I would with a good friend.

...Was I being too disrespectful?

Oh crap, no matter which way I think about it, I must be!

"Well then, I'll just be going over here..."

I decided to escape before he could say anything.

"Wait a minute!"

I was stopped.

This is bad, is he gonna take me to the guards?

"Wha, what is it?"

I started sweating like crazy.

However, the words he spoke were not what I expected.

"I was wondering...if we could be friends?"

"Eh?"

I can't believe he asked if we could be friends.

Honestly, it relieved me.

"Well, I mean...only if you want to. It's just, my mom and cousin are the only ones who never laughed at my voice before, so without thinking I kind of..."

What on earth did he do while he was in the Hero Party?

Well, it's not like I mind having a new friend.

On the contrary, it should have been me asking him.

"I was also thinking it'd be nice to be friends. I'm Youki. Nice to meet you."

"...Really? Thank you! You probably already know, but I'm Raven. Nice to meet you too."

We shook hands with a firm grip.

It was the first time in the 20 years since I was reincarnated that I made a friend.

I couldn't meet with Cecilia, but since I made a friend, today's day off turned out to be worthwhile.

"You know Youki, I feel like we've met somewhere before..."

"...Y-you sure you're not imagining things?"

I broke into a cold sweat.

Chapter 4 (part 2): I tried meeting the mother of the girl I like

It's only been a few days since I became friends with Raven.
And right now...

I'm stuffing my face eating breakfast in the guild.

It's vegetable and bean soup with rye bread—I have some funds saved, but I'm still going to eat frugally.

If my parents had made anything like that I would've complained the moment I laid eyes on it.

However, in this world it's fairly standard fare.

The crazy part is, now I don't even feel like doing any quests unless I eat it.

"Oho, what an extraordinary way to eat."

A voice called out suddenly.

I was in the middle of eating, but at some point, a lady sat down at my table. I was so surprised I stopped mid-bite.

"Oh my, what's wrong? If you're still eating why don't you go ahead and finish?"

Well then, I won't hold back and resume eating.

Like that, she continued to watch me, moreover with a giggling smile.

...Come to think of it, who exactly is she?

I don't remember being this close to such a beautiful lady during any of my quests.

While eating, I ransacked my brain but came up with nothing.

"It's just like my daughter said. You truly are entertaining."

...?

Like her daughter said?

I thought '*It couldn't be*', and dropped the rye bread in my hand.

"Oh my, it seems I haven't yet introduced myself. I am Celia Aquarain, Cecilia's mother. Pleased to meet you, Youki—*kun*?"

Whaaaaaaaat!?

Why did Cecilia's mom come to the guild so early in the morning????

"Oh my, aren't you still eating? Then I shall wait until you're finished."

I practically inhaled it.

I don't think I ever ate a meal so fast in either of my lives.

It was more like gulping down a drink than eating.

It made for quite a breakfast.

"Oho...You really don't have to rush yourself on my account. You truly are most interesting."

I finish off my last bite with a swig of milk.

After a short pause, I'm ready to listen to Celia—*san*'s story.

"...So, what did you need to talk to me about?"

"In truth, the other day it was reported that our family's guards were quite rude to you. For that, I came to apologize."

Waitwaitwaitwait.

I can't think of any reason why Celia—*san* had to be the one to come.

Heck, you should've sent the guards instead.

Why would the lady of the house come herself?

"Ah, they did have a bad attitude...I guess. I was really mad, but thanks to that I met someone new...I guess."

It pained me to receive such an apology, so I tried to get across that I really didn't mind.

"...Oh dear. According to my info, I heard you were quite taken with Cecilia...?"

Oh no!

I think she misunderstood something.

The gentle smile Celia—*san* wore changed, and now she was looking at me with a rather cold gaze.

"You-You're mistaken, a mistake! I just meant that I made a new friend yesterday."

"I see...I wonder exactly what kind of *friendship* you have with this girl?"

"I made a guy friend. A guy."

She still seemed unconvinced, so I made sure to state the gender.

"Oh my, is that so? Dear me, I just jumped to conclusions. If my daughter got mixed up with a scoundrel wouldn't that be just awful? Pardon me, did I scare you perhaps?"

Before my eyes, the frozen smile returned to the earlier gentle smile. I'll keep it secret that I almost shat myself.

"NO, I-AM-JUST-FINE."

No freaking way am I okay. I started driveling.

"Oh? I'm so relieved. Well, it seems like you're all finished eating, so shall we be on our way?"

"WHERE-MIGHT-WE-BE-GO-ING?"

I haven't even completely recovered yet.

The psychological damage was considerable. The amount of time I would need to recover is likely...

"Is it not obvious? To my mansion! You want to see Cecilia—*chan*, don't you?"

Instant recovery.

Something inside me flared.

"Yes, I'll go! Let's be on our way immediately!"

Luckily I hadn't taken on any new quests, so I was in the clear. But I should at least go and tell Clayman he doesn't have to work today for once.

"Clayman! Today. Me no work. Day off. Important stuff. Must do!"

I tell him in frantic speech that was practically gibberish.

"Th-that so? Seems like you're in a hurry there. Well, it'll shorten my stack so what do I care?"

Hearing the answer I about-face and quickly return to Celia—*san*.

"Oh, are you already prepared to go? Then let us be off. We shall make haste to return."

For some reason Celia—*san* is also in a hurry, and just like last time I boarded the carriage and headed for the Aquarain family mansion.

Chapter 4 (part 3): I tried getting set up

Brought along by Celia-san, I had once again gotten an invitation to go to the Aquarain family mansion. Right now, I'm standing outside the mansion with Celia-san, however...

"Celia-san? The two guards here..."

The guards that once held me at spear point were no longer here.

Two different guards are stationed here instead.

"Oh, the people who were rude to our honored guest...I wonder what became of them?"

It's probably a good thing she didn't know I wasn't human.

I determined it was best left unsaid that I was a demon.

I feel like something terrible would happen if she caught wind...

"As for those two...our head maid gave them a thorough *scolding*."

...what?

Geez, it's not nearly as bad as I thought.

"You know, our head maid used to be an A rank adventurer. For certain reasons she retired from being an adventurer and became a maid instead."

Oh? She sounds rather capable.

I wonder if she works as the captain of the guard too?

So maybe that's why the head maid would be the one to lecture them...?

"She's terribly scary when she's angry. She's very sweet on her husband though."

What are we talking about, a couple of newlyweds here?

"But it seems they once got into a quarrel. Her husband was so seriously injured it took half a year to make a full recovery."

"..."

"But, her husband was also an A rank adventurer. Injuries like that were normal from what I hear."

Scaaaaaary.

What on earth is she?

It took him half a year to fully recover even though they were the same rank? What's going on here?

"But, at the same time, she was also the one who lovingly nursed him back to health. She seemed quite happy to be able to spoil him so."

So in the end they still acted like newlyweds?

I wonder if her husband is really all right?

"...Oh my, speak of the devil!"

I look toward the mansion and see a lady wearing a maid uniform coming our way.

"I'm pleased to see you've returned, Madam."

Greeting Celia-san, she angles herself into a lovely bow.

Such a beautiful person couldn't possibly be very old.

Is she really the one from that story Celia-san just told me?

"Is this our honored guest? I am the head maid in the employ of the Aquarain family. I am called Sophia."

"Ah...hello. I'm Youki."

Because she lowered her head to me, I also casually bow.

What's this, she's just a normal person, isn't she?...or so I stupidly thought.

"Sophia, have you finished with *that* business?"

"Regrettably, I have not. I am only halfway done."

I wonder what she's talking about.

"Not yet? Only halfway?"

"Yes, it is taking quite some time, and though they are repeatedly blacking out I can think of no other method."

"..."

For some reason I feel I shouldn't interrupt them.

"Madam, how many bones shall I break until they are pardoned?"

"Hmm, I'll leave it up to you, Sophia—*san*. Do as much as you like."

Seriously, what the hell are they discussing?

"Understood. I shall refrain from doing more than five. Would it be safe to use intermediate level magic I wonder?"

"Indeed...there's only half left, so why not do so?"

"Understood. I shall do so. ...Youki—*sama*, are you feeling unwell? Your complexion appears rather ill."

"Ah no, I'm doing fine. It's just your imagination."

Even if it kills me I don't want to attract their attention.

Just what was the subject of their discussion?

The answer will remain buried in the darkness.

"Very well, then let me guide you to the mansion."

Following Sophia—*san*, we entered the Aquarain residence.

Upon entering the mansion, Celia-san pulls me along until we're in front of the familiar door leading to Cecilia's room.

After entering the mansion, with a 'please take your time', Sophia—*san* left us.

"Now Youki—*kun*, please enter when I give the signal."

Carefully, Celia-san entered the room.

Soon after, because I was given the cue, I enter as well.

"Wha? What is Youki—*san* doing here?"

It looks like she had just woken up.

Cecilia is in her nightgown with a bad case of bedhead.

"Oh this daughter of mine, sleeping in so late on a day off~"

Celia-san is in a corner of the room just giggling and laughing .

I thought it strange that she was off in the corner, but I understood as soon as I saw Cecilia's reaction.

She took the staff leaning on the nearby dresser, focused her attention over here and...WOAH!

“《Shiny Bolt》!”

The elementary level light magic spell, Shiny Bolt.

A direct hit from the lightning-esque holy light sent me flying out of the room.

It's so sudden that I can't react in time, and getting hit by magic without any defense up left me laid flat outside the room.

"Get out of my room!"

The door closed with a BAM.

I wish she had said that *before* she laid me out with magic.

Just before the door closed, I saw Celia-san chuckling to herself inside the room.

That woman set me up big time.

Chapter 4 (part 4): I tried being incompetent

For some reason I'm now sitting in the formal Japanese-style *Seiza*.

Really, what can I say for myself?

"Um...Cecilia? My feet are starting to go numb...Would it be alright if I sit on your bed like last time?"

I timidly ask Cecilia.

Cecilia is like a Goddess to me.

I am sure she will grant me mercy...

"Absolutely not. You must reflect upon your actions."

Mercy was not granted to me this day.

Her mouth is pleasant and smiling, but I could see the smile did not reach her eyes.

The feeling she's giving off is...crap, this might be the end.

I could hear giggling off to the side.

In the midst of this mayhem the only person who seems to be enjoying herself is Celia—san.

She kept laughing at the current situation.

...Celia—san was the culprit behind this, you'd think she could give me a hand here.

About the time I was thinking that, my legs had just about reached their limit.

"Cecilia, isn't it about time you forgave him? It's not like he saw you naked. It's just a nightgown."

Ooh! Help has arrived at last!

Even Cecilia's normal demeanor is returning.

"After all, you'll soon be in a relationship where you'll see each other naked, so there's no need to get all flustered over this, is there?"

She dropped a fucking bomb on this conversation?!

This person ain't my ally!

Cecilia's face turned red.

I couldn't move because my legs were numb.

After sitting in *Seiza* for so long, even my Cheat powers couldn't help me now.

"Oh my dear Cecilia, your face is bright red, you know? Could it be you already...?"

I move in to change the topic to stop her from dropping even more bombs.

"By the way, why did you have me come here today? It couldn't be just for this, right?"

Even if it's true, isn't this taking it a bit too far?

"Eh? Of course not. But we couldn't talk before with all of *that* going on."

I listen to Celia—san as she sits on the bed.

Cecilia seems to have recovered and sits beside me.

"The other day, Youki-kun, you came by the mansion, right? In truth, it's rare for Cecilia to invite a man to the residence."

The only reason Cecilia 'invited' me that time was because she wanted to continue our conversation.

"Cecilia doesn't have many male acquaintances. Only the Hero and his swordsman friend come to mind...and here comes this fellow nobody knows anything about! That's why I hid with everyone to see what was going on."

Now that she mentions it, I didn't see anyone else at the mansion aside from the two guards. Considering it's such a huge mansion, I did find it strange that there were no servants about...

"And then, I find you and Cecilia talking and laughing."

I see, she's probably talking about when I entered my *Chuuni-mode**.
...Which means that...

"Did you perhaps overhear everything I said...?"

"Of course I did. You were so cool, Youki-kun! Like 'The only one for me is you'. I want my own husband to say that to me~e."

Gaaaaah!?

This is terrible! I had already wanted to rid myself of that black stain from my history.

The color drained from my face as my soul left my body, then Celia—san delivered the final blow.

"You even struck a nice pose, didn't you? Everyone in the mansion was mimicking it after that~"

Ahaha...this is even worse.

I hid my face with one hand and with the other I raised my finger in something like a 'wait-a-minute pose'. How could something like a spur of the moment *Chuuni*-mode accident achieve such sudden popularity among the mansion staff? With all her employees imitating me, it's no wonder she always seemed to be giggling in my direction.

"Please just kill me already..."

"Ohoho, come now...Let's get down to business then, shall we?"

Celia—san's face suddenly became very serious.

Apparently, this was to be a very important discussion.

Cecilia and I also adopted a serious look and listened intently.

"We have had many suitors for Cecilia's hand in marriage."

She has my full attention.

This must be related to my conversation with Cecilia about the nations recruiting talented individuals.

This particular recruitment through an arranged marriage.

I wonder what happened after Cecilia refused all the proposals?

"Among them, there was also a proposal from the Hero."

...What?

"It appears that Hero fellow has feelings for Cecilia."

Something inside me broke.

On one hand, there was a handsome hero who vanquished the Demon Lord and saved the world.

On the other, a boring-faced rank D adventurer hiding the fact that he was a demon.

...I really have no chance, do I?

"Celia—san, is the engagement already...?"

"Ohoho, no worries there. Cecilia already turned him down...but the Hero won't give up so easily, you see?"

After a moment's reprieve I was soon dropped back into hell. Cecilia let out a sigh.

"No way, what's Hero—kun thinking? Wasn't there a mage in the party he could have fallen in love with? Did he have to go by the book and get smitten with the noble lady? He doesn't need to go out of his way to ruin my lovelife!!!"

In my agitation I went and bitched about Hero—kun.

This is bad, I badmouthed him.

Cecilia also saw me get out of line, my face the very picture of irritation.

"Oh my, to say that much about the Hero, you must love Cecilia very much."

Somehow, I was misunderstood in good way.

Even Cecilia looked relieved.

"So I'd like to ask you, Youki-kun...would you like to marry Cecilia? Answer immediately, yes or no."

Cecilia as my wife?! I was so surprised I just about fell into a panic, but managed to stop myself. Hmm...

I let the last lucky chance slip away, and I may not get another chance like this. With Celia—san's blessing, even if we encounter trouble in the future, she would help take care of it.

My answer is...

“I’m sorry, but no.”

I lowered my head. The answer was no.

"...May I ask for your reason?"

"Well, I know it's a very attractive offer. But Cecilia already turned me down when I confessed. That's why I decided to make an honest living and then confess once again."

Celia—san looked directly at me as she listened.

I also want to know what Cecilia thought of my answer, but wait patiently.

"And honestly, talking about marriage this early, ...it's just...that is..."

Shoot! I messed up at the most important part!

Without a chance to give another excuse, Celia—san's serious mask crumbled as she looked at me.

"Ohoho, Youki-kun, you pass! It appears as though my daughter has a good eye, wouldn't you agree?"

?

Not completely understanding, Cecilia and I both head tilt.

"After all, how could I possibly give my precious daughter away to someone I only just met today?"

"Eeehh?! You set me up again?"

"Not at all! It would have been dreadful if a suspicious little *bug* had attached itself to my daughter. That's why I decided to test you."

Cecilia hadn't been given any warning, so she was a little angry.
In any case, being tested means that...

"Suppose I had agreed to the marriage...?"

"I would have called Sophia to *escort* you out of the mansion."

Apparently I had been faced with a fairly dangerous choice.

A barrier I couldn't overcome even with my Cheat.

I also came to understand that Sophia—san is one of those barriers.

"I told you that you passed, didn't I? You don't have to tremble so much...Please be a good friend to Cecilia. You're welcome here anytime, Youki-kun."

Seems like Celia—san has approved of me.

...But wait?

Today it seems like I haven't progressed with Cecilia at all. After that, Celia—san kept talking about Cecilia's childhood, embarrassing her

daughter. I heard the legend of Sophia and nearly fainted. And so the fun day came to a close.

*Translator's note. While after we do our own translation of Chapter 1 we'll include a proper explanation of Chuunibyou, but for those still lost to the reference of *Chuunibyou*, *Chuuni*, and *Chuu2* here is a short rundown:

Chuunibyou: lit. Eighth grader syndrome. This is that period of life when children around the age of 13 start to undergo puberty and may realize how insignificant they are in the grand scheme of things. So they'll turn anti-social, or become a hipster, or in the case of Youki here, in a single word, become 'delusional'. But it's a bit more than that. Think of it like playing 'Make Believe' after elementary school. You act out a character you've created in your head (which is usually a 'self-insert'/'wish-fulfillment' type of character), with a whole back history, and supernatural stuff happening like having crazy powers, or a cursed arm, *etc.* There is also some social disdain for people as old as Youki who still act out their Chuunibyou (basically when you get into high school you should be done with that sort of thing). When Youki goes into his "*Chuuni*-mode" he is essentially 'acting out a character', someone confident who will talk in a boastful manner, or act the part of a cartoon villain.

For a more in-depth explanation of *Chuunibyou*, [check out this awesome article.](#)

Chapter 5 (part 1): I tried reuniting with my former underlings

I've come to the Othell Forest today for a quest. It took about five hours by carriage to get here from the imperial city of Minerva.

Even though it's still the middle of the day, the sunlight can't quite get through so it's rather dreary. Sometimes monster growls can be heard, making it a creepy forest.

My rank has risen to C.

Last time at the Aquarain mansion, I learned that Hero-kun had also fallen in love with Cecilia.

I realized it would be bad for me to keep on like I was, and I wanted to shorten the difference between Hero-kun and myself even if only a little bit.

So I came to the forest today to slay a rank C monster — Cockatrice — who was causing trouble in the area.

"Geez, petrifying the nearby villagers impulsively at random...just what is it trying to do?"

The cockatrice is a monster with the power of petrification.

But, because it doesn't have any other noteworthy abilities, it's only rank C.

Still, it was a fearsome enough monster for your average villager.

After walking in the forest a while and doing a little bushwhacking, I heard a noise from the bushes ahead.

I stayed vigilant and slowly approached the bush.

“Woah!”

Suddenly, a headless knight jumped out sword swinging.

I avoided the sword with a backstep, and put some distance between us.

With my specialty magic I thought I'd trample him, but...

“....Huh?”

"...What the? Captain, is that you?"

Now that I get a good look this guy was one of my underlings at the Demon Castle: the Duke of Dullahan. The head he was holding to his right had a surprised look.

"I knew it was you, Captain! What happened to your horns and wings? Wait, before that, where have you been all this time? The Captain who never left his room was suddenly missing, the Hero vanquished the Demon Lord, we were all so worried!"

"Eh? Calm down first. Before I get to your questions, why are you here?"

When Cecilia persuaded me that day, there wasn't a moment to spare, so I ended up leaving the Demon Castle without saying a word.

Could it be that the others survived?

"I was searching for you, Captain! Hapyneth and Sheik too, we were all really worried about you!"

Hapyneth is a harpy, and Sheik is a pixie, both of whom were also my former underlings.

"Are they also here in this forest?"

"Yeah, today we decided to search for you here. We planned to rendezvous just a little ways from here. Let's go, Captain!"

I hadn't seen my old underlings in so long, I really wanted to see them again.

Plus, they'd been searching for me all this time.

How could I refuse to meet with them after that?

So Duke led the way, and we arrived at the rendezvous point.

"...Alive..."

"Hooray~! It's the Captain~!"

There was Hapyneth and Sheik, just like Duke said.

Hapyneth narrowed her eyes and looked away, while Sheik had a big smile and gave me a hug.

"...You guys were still alive?"

When the Demon Lord was vanquished by the Hero, I was worried that these guys had been done in as well.

I'm glad they were able to make it out alive.

Angry at my words, standing proud with his legs apart and a hand at his hip, Duke rebelliously replied,

"Don't write us off so easily!"

According to them, that day when the Hero Party came, because I always commanded them to dump the party at the nearby village, they were on standby in another room.

However, no matter how long they waited, I never called for them. Becoming worried, they checked on me in my room and...

"...Captain was gone."

Hapyneth gave an uncharacteristically lengthy response,

"And then, you know, after the Demon Lord was defeated the three of us ran with our tails between our legs from the castle."

'Ahahaha~' Sheik was laughing.

When I asked what was so funny, apparently when they were running away, Duke was crying out "Captaaaiin!"

That is rather funny, I must admit.

"But, we never doubted that Captain was still alive...that's why we searched all this time."

Even half a month later they were still searching for me.

They sure thought highly of their boss.

"After all, Captain was a shut-in who never left his room. We couldn't help but anxiously wonder where you were."

...What?

"...Left alone...what would you do..."

Wait what?

"Sometimes you'd flip out and start yelling the strangest things~..."

Just a damn minute, what the heck *did* these bastards think of me?

"At least it's good that we finally found you.....Now Captain, I asked you before but just what happened to your horns and wings?"

"I got rid of them."

“ ” “ ” “ ”
... ...

After that the reaction varied.

Duke was crying 'what were you thinking?!', and Hapyneth was saying something like 'you finally awakened'.

What's up with that?

And Sheik?

He laughed so hard he was left twitching on the ground.

"Captain! What on earth happened while we were gone?!"

Duke cried and hugged me closely, looking for an explanation.

How could I possibly explain this to them?

Should I just be honest?

"In the Hero party, there was this cute cleric girl. After I confessed to her and got shot down I've been living as a human."

The crying Duke, the callously faced Hapyneth, and the rolfcoptering Sheik.

The three who had previous reacted differently all simultaneously turned to stone.

Chapter 5 (part 2): I tried to fulfill the wish of my former underlings

I lightly slapped my three underlings who had turned to stone to bring them back to their senses.

That summary was probably too simple, so I gave them a more in-depth explanation.

"Captain, why are you chasing the skirt of a *human* girl? Captain's a demon, right? Getting rid of your horns and wings— it's too tragic."

Duke was drowning himself in tears.

Cecilia is the one who invited me out to the world beyond my room.

It's not like I was *just* a skirt chaser.

"...Repulsive."

That was uncalled for.

Hey, Hapyneth, don't you look away from me!

"Ahahaha, ahahaha~ It's no use, I can't stop laughing!"

'Can't stop' my ass! Quit it Sheik, you're being obnoxious!

"Haaa~ Anyway, right now I'm a human Youki, living a human lifestyle. ...I'm not your captain anymore. I came here for a quest. See ya, live long

enough to fall in love, guys."

It's sad but I need to draw the line.

For both Cecilia and these guys.

"No way! Captain is our Captain."

"...That's right."

"I think so too~"

What are these guys thinking?

"No, I mean, I'm living as a human now, I'm no longer a demon."

"So that Cleric girl, she's a looker is she?"

"...Beautiful girl type."

"Forget about her looks, those breasts of hers~"

These guys didn't listen to a word I said.

And Sheik. Why do you know about *that*?

"I'd like to meet her, the human girl Captain fell for."

"...Agreed."

"Me too! Me too!"

What are these guys up to?

While I stood there stunned, those three just carried on with their conversation until they decided on something.

"We have come to a decision; we want to meet the human Captain's in love with."

"Are you *retarded*?!"

What's with this sudden turn of events?

Before they were acting all cool, now they're all pumped for a meet-and-greet.

"In the first place, I came here for a quest. I need to kill the cockatrice that's been terrorizing the villagers around here. I don't have time to play around with you lot..."

"Roger that!"

"...Move out."

"And we're off~"

I was going to stop them, but they thoroughly ignored me and headed out into the forest.

Sometime later, the threesome came back dragging along the corpse of the cockatrice. Those little shits, at least give me a part to play in my own quest!

"Now we can go!"

"...Mission complete."

"Been a while since I last exercised~"

No matter what I say, they're intent on meeting Cecilia.

"...If you're willing to go that far, you must be prepared, right?"

One hurdle we absolutely have to clear is getting them into the imperial city.

It's up to me to beat some understanding into them.

"Of course!"

"...Acceptable."

"No worries~"

They seem very determined.

It can't be helped if they're that resolved.

Guess I gotta bring them home with me.

I gave them my okay and they rejoiced. A rather intrepid smile appeared on my face.

Two days later...

With the threesome in tow, I returned to the guild to complete my cockatrice quest.

"Captain...I can barely see...do I really have to wear this?"

"If you take it off there'll be a huge commotion. Well, I would eliminate any commotion before it got started with my magic, but you get the point."

Duke was wearing a helmet to keep his head from falling off, and the helmet was strapped to his armor.

This why he just looks like a normal armored knight.

"There are so many amazing things~"

Without his wings, Sheik looks like a normal cute young boy.

His wings are so small they're easily hidden by clothes.

The real problem was...

I could hear the sound of gentle sobbing behind me.

Hapyneth.

She's a harpy so there are feathers all over her arms and legs.

I pondered over how to go about her disguise, and she earned my respect with her earnestness.

The result was...

"...Who will want to marry me now?"

It wasn't so much a full-body waxing as it was a full-body *plucking*.

...It might have been overkill, but it's what she wanted.

There were no regrets.

Duke said 'Captain, this is too much!', and even Sheik was all 'I can't even laugh about this...!'.
...



...Even so, she didn't regret it.

As such, thanks to me they were able to pass as humans and accompany me back.

We went to see the lazy receptionist Clayman at his desk.

"Clayman, I've completed the quest to slay the cockatrice. I've already given the corpse to another staff member."

"M'kay, then I'll finish processing it...Yeesh, what a pain in the ass."

Clayman had finally given in. Just recently he stopped directing me to the other receptionists.

"...Hey. 'Those three behind you your friends or somethin'? An armored knight, a brat, and...hey, what's that girly crying for? You do something to her, you scoundrel?"

"Ah, no idea."

Clayman inclined his head at me as I played dumb. But because it was too troublesome he didn't bother to inquire any further. After he finished, I headed out with my three tagalongs to the Aquarain mansion.

Chapter 5 (part 3): I tried letting my former underlings meet the girl I like

"You are despicable."

Bringing along my three former underlings we came to Cecilia's mansion. Today, we were fortunate that Cecilia was able to fit us into her schedule and meet with us, however...

"...Kindhearted."

Hapyneth, why you... I spilled the beans with Cecilia on what I'd done. Cecilia gave Hapyneth a big hug and patted her on the head.

...I'm so jealous!

And here I was sitting Seiza again while being lectured.

"Are you daft, Youki-san? Surely there was a better way to go about her disguise. To think you would pluck all of this poor girl's feathers, even if it's for the sake of making a demon appear human,...reflect upon your actions!"

"It is as you say. I am indeed an idiot."

While I was apologizing, I was finally starting to regret what I had done.

Duke and Sheik were also nodding their heads in agreement.

C'mon, give me a break here guys.

Well, it really is all my fault.

I quickly kneeled and put my head to the floor in Dogeza apologizing, hoping I would be forgiven.

"I must say, this mansion is pretty big."

"...Spacious!"

"Still, the Demon Castle was bigger~"

Duke and Hapyneth made normal observations, but Sheik, that was too rude!

Looking around Cecilia's room, everywhere they looked they saw something new and oogled everything.

Just please don't break anything, I'm begging you...

"So you're his...former subordinates? You're all quite adorable."

Cecilia chuckled watching the threesome.

I wonder if I should tell her a bit more about them.

"They are *now*. When I first met Duke, he wasn't like this at all. Dullahan was super taciturn. And yet, he somehow turned into this flamboyant guy."

I reminisce about our first meeting.

If I remember right, when the Demon Lord gave me my first troop, Duke was my very first underling.

Duke overheard Cecilia and me talking about him and came over to interrupt.

"When we first met, I hated the Captain. He was fairly famous among the Devil Castle's personnel."

Duke raised up his head and talked nostalgically about the past.

But, it's no wonder I was hated.

When Cecilia heard I was famous, she looked impressed. ...I have a feeling she misunderstood something.

"Well, I suppose not so much *famous* as *infamous*."

"Eh? Is that so? I thought for sure you would say he was famous for his great power...or am I mistaken?"

Totally wrong there. If I was famous for that, I wouldn't have been stuck as a mini-boss.

"Captain he...never went outside. He was infamous as a complete shut-in. And there was also what you said to Zekiel-sama that became infamous too."

Hey wait, don't repeat that!

I tried to stop Duke, but Cecilia asked him to continue.

"Our superior Zekiel-sama suddenly ordered Captain to go out and attack some humans. 'Heeeh, Sorry but I can't move from this spot. I was

told to never leave this room, you see. Understand this: I will not abandon this room...until I die.' is what he replied."

Another stain from my dark history was brought to light.

Cecilia desperately tried to hold back her laughter.

"Zekiel-sama was so angry he nearly blew his top, and he just left without saying anything. After that, he visited Captain numerous times to get him out. But, our irresponsible Captain's opponent soon tired, and one day he simply stopped asking Captain to attack people."

Cecilia reached her limit and laughed her head off.

I could only manage a bitter smile.

I did a lot of dumb things back then.

...And even now I suppose.

"Well, that rumor got around, and thus the associated hatred. But, once he became my boss, I learned my place."

Through a show of force, naturally.

On the first day my troop assembled Duke attacked me out of nowhere. I wondered what he was thinking.

I'm sure I don't have to say the obvious result.

"But, because he turned the tables and thoroughly *indoctrinated* me, I became who I am today."

Around that time I was still overly excited from being reincarnated.

He was my first underling, and I ended up brainwashing him pretty severely.

But, it's not like I regretted it.

"...How did you end up meeting the other two?"

Cecilia asked after she finished laughing.

Hapyneth and Sheik, huh.

Those two I...

"Speaking of which, where are they?"

Gone.

We were so busy reminiscing we didn't even notice.

At some point they left the room.

This is bad. Disguised though they may be, there was still the worst case scenario to worry about.

"Let's find them quickly. They must still be in the mansion somewhere."

Cecilia, Duke, and I left the room to find the other two.

Those blockheads just running off as they please...

The Aquarain mansion is so big that searching is a huge undertaking.

Entrance, Library, Kitchen. We're running around everywhere and still no sign of them.

While catching our breath, we think about how to locate my missing underlings.

"I got it! Let's see if Sophia-san will help!"

The Head Maid should be very familiar with the estate, so if we can get her to cooperate...

Plus, she's the kind of person that would appear out of nowhere, so she should be able to find them quickly.

Cecilia was in agreement, and even though Duke had no knowledge of her he also voiced his approval. So we went to Sophia-san's private quarters.

"Just like that. That is the perfect angle for your back. Please remember that angle when you are performing a bow of greeting."

"...Understood!"

...What's this?

Hapyneth is wearing a maid uniform, and Sophia-san is giving her lessons in bowing.

That was the situation we happened upon when we came to the servant's quarters.



"Oh dear. M'lady, Youki-sama, and...a new honored guest? How may I be of service? Right now I'm in the process of training our new maid."

At some point, Hapyneth became a maid-in-training.

"Sophia-san, where exactly did you meet that girl?"

"She was roaming about the mansion. The new maid was scheduled to arrive today, but she appeared to have gotten lost, so I brought her back here."

Sophia inquired if there was any problem.

Yeah, there's a *huge* problem.

After explaining the situation, Hapyneth was released. By the way, there was something fishy about the real new hire, so she ended up being interrogated.

...That's not our fault, right?

"Still I must say it's quite unfortunate. She was a very good study, and would have made an excellent maid."

Sophia-san was really disappointed.

Even Hapyneth was in rather high spirits about the compliment.

Still, there was no way she could be a maid here.

Sophia-san looked back at Hapyneth's regret-filled face as we left the servant's quarters.

"And finally Sheik. Where did that little rascal get off to?"

In a way, this was the scariest part.

Because he's always brimming with curiosity, you never know what he might do.

If we don't find him soon, something terrible is likely to occur.

"...In the garden."

Way to go Hapyneth.

She saw where Sheik had gone.

Still can't quite forgive her for going off on her own though.

Trusting Hapyneth's info we head for the garden.

"Zzzz...zzzzz...."

"What a little cutie. I wonder if he got lost?"

Arriving at the garden, we found Sheik sleeping soundly using Celia-san's lap as a pillow.

Thank goodness. Sheik wasn't found out.

I was wondering what trouble he would have gotten himself in, but it seems those worries were unfounded.

"I'm so relieved."

"Thank goodness."

"...Much relief."

Knowing Sheik's personality, we were all relieved at the same time.

"Oh...? Youki-kun's here. Are the two behind you your friends? ...And it seems that one is a *girl*?"

She inquired while continuing to stroke Sheik's head.

Wait wait, please don't glare at me and Hapyneth.

"Yes. They are my very normal *friends*. And that little guy is also one of them... I hope he didn't cause you any trouble?"

I made sure to heavily emphasize the friend part.

...and I really hope Sheik didn't cause any problems.

"Oh, is that so? I love children, so he wasn't a problem at all. He was running around playing in the garden, and I decided to join him. And so we just kept playing until he finally tuckered out."

I get it now, that's how he ended up napping on her lap. Thankfully everything seems to have worked out fine. When I think about what might have happened if he'd broken anything...I involuntarily shudder.

We found them both safe and sound, and decided to leave as it was getting to be dusk.

While bidding each other farewell, Celia-san and Cecilia said my friends could come back to play anytime.

We went to a nearby hill once we left Minerva proper in order to talk.

"So? Are you happy now?"

"It was a good visit."

"...Very much."

"It was so much fun~"

I see, now we should be able to properly sever ties.

"Then I guess it's finally time to go our separate ways. I'm gonna head back to the Inn and...No way, you guys aren't gonna say you want to continue on like this, *are you?*"

Well, I guess I already knew the answer...

"I would like to."

"...Obvious conclusion."

"Celia-san's lap pillow was so nice~ I want to lay on her lap again~"

As I feared. Sheik seems to want something a bit different, but close enough.

I always had a feeling they just might...

And thus, Duke, Hapyneth, and Sheik came to live with me in Minerva.

And as it happens, the next day Hapyneth was soon taken away by Sophia-san.

Just where did you get your information from Sophia-san...?

Chapter 6 (part 1): I tried going on a date

Today, Celia-san suddenly invited me to the Aquarain mansion.

...But before I got there my shoelaces broke, and a black cat-eared person crossed my path. The bad omens were aplenty.

"I've got a bad feeling about this.... what should I do?"

Even though I said that, since I was invited I didn't want to just leave, so I entered the mansion.

"...Follow."

Hapyneth, now the newly hired maid, led me to Celia-san's room.

"...As you will."

Hapyneth then left with a beautiful bow.

She really looks the part.

As expected of someone hand-picked by Sophia-san.

I had no idea Hapyneth was suited to this kind of work.

I guess it doesn't matter much now. After knocking, I enter the room.

"Oh my, you're here. Please sit down over there."

Celia-san greeted me with a smile.

Since she usually messes with me, I inspect the the room before sitting.

It doesn't look like she's planning anything this time.

Though there might be some bad news.

I sit on the guest sofa as I was told.

"Did you have some business with me today?"

After all the ominous happenings today, I prayed it was good news.

"Actually, I want you to accompany Cecillia on her day off."

"Day off?"

Sounds like something good after all!

My heart swells in anticipation, and I ask for further details.

"She's getting tired of all the proposals and parties. That's why I want her to be able to relax for a day."

It looks like she's taking her daughter's well-being into consideration and forcing her to take a break.

Even I've noticed that her stress has been increasing every time I come to see her.

"My goodness, there's so many superfluous proposals and parties. But she's such a conscientious girl, she just can't flat out refuse them."

That sounds like the Cecilia I know.

So that's why she's being forced to take a break.

"What would you like me to do?"

"It's a long-awaited vacation day, and Cecilia is a girl after all, so I thought a shopping trip would be perfect. But it's too sad for her to go all by herself. So I was hoping you would accompany her?"

In other words, a parent-approved date.

This is a chance I couldn't have even dream of.

A Celia-san approved, undeniable date!

"Yes, understood. Consider it done."

Is such a lucky day really possible?

Maybe those bad omens were just my imagination.

Those shoelaces were old, and meeting the cat-eared person were all coincidences.

That must be it.

"I figured Youki-kun would agree. Cecilia is actually already waiting by the carriage. She's waiting for *you*, so hurry along."

I bow to Celia-san and hurriedly excused myself.

She told me to go all out.

Even if she hadn't, I'm already going on a date with the girl I love.
Of course I'd give it everything I've got.
I hurry to meet up with Cecilia.

"Youki-san. You came at last."

Cecilia was wearing a large straw hat and glasses.
It was different from her usual wear, but I must admit I enjoyed it.

"Sorry, did you wait long?"

I always wanted to use that line.
I never had a chance to say it in my previous life.

"No, it's fine. I knew that Youki-san would make haste to come. Now, please hurry into the carriage and we'll be on our way?"

I climb aboard the carriage and we head off to the city.

...Oh no, it's just me and Cecilia, alone together.

Even though it's the second time it's happened, I'm more nervous now since it's a date.

"...Your face is red, are you quite all right?"

Cecilia took a good look at my face and...too close, too close!
My face got even redder, and I backed away from her.

...Shit, I'm super weak against these kinds of things.

Anyway, I tell her nothing's wrong with me.

"...That's good then. If you start feeling unwell, please tell me immediately. Also, these are for you, Youki-san."

I was given a hat and sunglasses...?

What are these for?

"I think it best if you disguise yourself. Just in case."

I see, that's why she's wearing the straw hat and glasses.

I've no doubt that if one of the Hero Party members shopped in town there'd be a huge frenzy.

But why do I need a disguise?

"I don't really need one. I'm not very well known."

"If my identity is discovered, you might be in danger from being seen with me."

That was certainly a possibility.

I totally understand, a man's jealousy can be a frightening thing.

But at least Cecilia has a lot of loyal female supporters too.

"Got it. ...I'll do my best to help this be a great day off!"

It's our first date, and though my words may not carry any weight, I still think it's what a man ought to say.

"Heehee, I'll hold you to it."

Cecilia smiled at me.

I have no choice but to give it my all now.

I *will* make this date a success.

Fully resolved, I don the disguise I was given.

With glasses and hat on I was surprised how different I felt.

"Then let's be on our way."

We exit the carriage and mix into the crowd.

The pedestrians steal some glances at Cecilia, but they're merely gazing at a random beautiful girl.

We are still in the clear.

I pay no heed to the whispers of people wondering why such a beauty is with *that* guy.

I'm gonna enjoy my very first date to the fullest.

I'm not exactly sure what to do on a date, but we start by heading to a clothing shop, which was a given.

The clothing shop we entered had a lot of female customers.

There were some guys here and there, but nearly all of them were here with their girlfriends.

“What do you think of this?”

Cecilia held the clothes in front of her body, and inquired if I thought it looked good or not.

Getting to enjoy a shopping trip after so long, she had a big smile when she asked me.

Honestly I had no idea how to answer, but she gave me a variety of clothes to choose from, so I pick out the outfit I think would suit her best.

"Then I'll get this one. We should also get something for Youki-san." After deciding on Cecilia's clothes, now it was my turn.

This time, *I'm* the one to pick out a few outfits, and buy the one *she* liked best.

"We managed to get some nice things. Today has been really fun so far. I've been accumulating so much stress lately, it's nice to take a day to relax."

“I’m glad you’re enjoying it.”

The day is still young.

We have plenty of time, and tons of places we can go.

And if we're able to have a lot of fun, I'll be able to see Cecilia smile more.

I bet our friendship levels are increasing too.

After leaving the clothing shop we both smile.

I'm sure Cecilia is thinking the same thing I am, that today will be a great day.

...At least it would have been until that moment.

The incident occurred at the next place we visited.

Near the clothing store was an accessory shop.

Since women are fond of jewelry, I asked her to go there.

“Cecilia, let’s check this place out.”

I'm sure there are plenty of things that will look great on her.

We’ll spend some time here, then go eat—it's perfect.

You might wonder at all the typical first date plans, but all that matters to me is that Cecilia has fun.

I don't need any ulterior motives.

“Accessory shop....is it? I guess that’s fine.”

After Cecilia gave the okay we go to enter the shop, but then a voice calls out to us.



“Eh, can it be? Cecillia?!”

When we turn around we see, just like us, a hat-and-glasses disguised Hero-kun and that Mage bitch.

So those ominous signs were leading to *this*...

Chapter 6 (part 2): I tried going on a “double date”?

Hero-kun waved at Cecilia and came towards us.

Man oh man, to think those ominous signs were leading to this...and you are smiling way too much dude...

Pay attention to your Mage lady friend, she's scowling!

"Oh, Cecilia! HEEY CECILI-Mmph!?"

Hero-kun was yelling out her name when the Mage girl clamped his mouth shut.

"Hey, Yuuga, are you an idiot? I hope you're not forgetting how famous we are now?"

She gave him a whispered lecture.

I easily guessed what she told him.

"She may be a cleric, but when she's walking around incognito you don't just yell out her name, Yuuga! Everyone around us will find out! Use your head for once!"

She came down on him real hard.

But she was absolutely right.

Hero-kun kept his trap shut and nodded his head earnestly.

"Got it. Sorry Mikana, Cecilia."

Hero-kun apologized in a low voice.

He realized he was in the wrong.

Still, it would have been obvious if he'd taken even a second to think about it.

"By the way, what are you doing here Cecilia? It's been a while so me and Mikana decided to take the day off. If you like, why don't we hang out together?"

Hey now, do you not see me standing *right* here?

It's not like I blend into the background!

"I'm sorry. Although I'm taking the day off as well, I'm already here with my good friend..."

"Good friend?"

After Hero-kun responded to Cecilia's statement, he finally realized that I existed.

He had a weird expression on his face when he saw me.

I guess he has a problem with some other guy being with his crush.

"Aah...then, bring him along."

What the heck, I'm just a tagalong? Without waiting for Cecilia's answer, Hero-kun grabbed her arm and took her into the accessory shop.

Maybe he was just being over-confident, but Cecilia didn't look happy at all.

Me and the Mage girl were left behind, and she took a moment to voice her complaints.

"Dammit, this was supposed to be a date with just me and Yuuga!"

The Mage girl, I think her name name was Mikana?

I'm feeling the same way she is.

"I finally forced him to take a day off with just the two of us...the weather was nice so I invited him to go shopping just like we used to..."

'Like we used to', I wonder if she's childhood friends with Hero-kun?

Haaah...I couldn't help but sigh.

I'm also irritated that my first date got hijacked.

"...Hey you, you like that cleric right? You were together, maybe on a date?"

I was suddenly asked a difficult question.

How should I answer...?

"Hmm, I know the answer without even asking. Give it your best shot. If you do, maybe Yuuga will finally give up on her..."

She was kinda cheering me on.

I thought she was a total bitch, but maybe she was just really devoted to Hero-kun?

My opinion of her slightly improved...

"But with your boring face, I'm not holding out much hope..."

Previous statement withdrawn. She may not be a bitch, but her personality is horrible.

...Still I may think just a *tiny bit* better of her, so I suppose I can call her by name in my internal monologues.

"What are you spacing out for? Just how far are you gonna let those two go on their own? I'm gonna go catch up."

Mikana entered the shop, rudely leaving me behind.

But she's right.

He may not have a chance with Cecilia, but that doesn't mean I should let them cozy up to each other.

I follow Mikana into the shop.

There's a ton of couples in here.

I bet a bunch of guys are buying presents for their girls.

Looking around for her, I finally spot Cecilia.

She's together with Hero-kun, and Mikana also made her way over.

"Oh, Youki-san, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to leave you behind..."

I know Cecilia isn't at fault, so she doesn't need to apologize.

It was all Hero-kun's fault for forcibly dragging her along.

Of course I don't say this out loud.

"It's ok, I don't mind. Anyway, it looks like there's all kinds of different accessories."

Inside the store were all sorts of accessories; rings, bracelets, necklaces, brooches, and earrings, all ranging from the cheap to the expensive.

"Since we're here, let's get something. Which one should we buy?"

Hero-kun reacted to what I said.

"Sounds good. Mikana, Cecilia, I'll get something for you."

Hero-kun gave them his best pretty boy smile.

Is this a competition or something?

Saying he'll get something for them, them's fightin' words!

I'm only buying something for Cecilia though!

"Then I'll pick out something too."

And so two men started deliberating between all the accessories.

Mikana looks super happy that Hero-kun is buying something for her.

Cecilia has a forced smile. Probably because Hero-kun started this fight.

"...Now then, which should I get?"

I have never in my two lives picked out a present for a girl, with the only exception being my mother.

...Which one do I get?

I wander around the store until something catches my eye.

"...Ah, this looks nice."

What I found was a reasonably priced necklace.

It may not have been the most expensive thing in the store, but the workmanship was solid, and it didn't *look* cheap.

A good choice if I do say so myself.

"Cecilia, what do you think of this?"

I have Cecilia try it on.

Looks pretty nice on her.

She seems to like it too.

And just when we had a good thing going...

"Cecilia, come try on what I picked out for you."

Hero-kun crowded in between us.

Read the mood, things were just getting good!

Hero-kun brought over an expensive-looking and ornately decorated hairpin.

But the jewels were all cluttered together in an extreme mess.

Hey buddy...don't just pick something that looks expensive. People will doubt your fashion sense.

Even Cecilia and Mikana's faces are uneasy.

Neither of the girls like it.

"Here, try it on."

Hero-kun didn't catch the looks of disdain.

In order to put it on, Hero-kun took off Cecilia's straw hat...wait you retard!!

Everyone but Hero-kun were stupefied.

If you do that then...

"Hey, isn't that Cecilia-sama?!"

"Ohmigawd, isn't that Hero-sama next to her?!"

"Mikana-sama is here too!"

Their identities revealed, the shop erupted into chaos.

Even though I was with them, I was pushed back by the flood of people, and became just another person among the mob of fans.

"Yuuga, you idiot!"

"Cecilia, where are you?!"

"Youki-san, where did you go?!"

"Quit shovin', you're disrupting the shop's business! Everyone get out!"

I demanded everyone leave so they could escape the shop, but the chaos could not be controlled.

More and more people crowded in and barraged the three heroes with questions.

"Hero-sama, who's your favorite?!"

"What about your engagement to the princess?"

"Cecilia-sama, you turned down all your marriage proposals, were you saving yourself for Hero-sama?"

"Mikana-sama, what are your plans?"

"Huh? Wasn't there one more person here...?"

The three were flooded with questions while I was being crushed by the mob.

After 6 hours, the four of us were exhausted.

Once the commotion died down we relaxed in a nearby park.

"...Cecilia, Mikana, oh and you too, do you guys want to go have some dinner..."

"No way in hell!"

"Not going!"

"I shall politely decline!"

In that moment our three hearts became one.

Does this guy, who incited the uproar in the first place, even know what he's saying? Hero-kun should be just as tired as the rest of us.

I don't want any more trouble today, *thank you very much*.

"Ahaha...right..."

You should think about what you've done first.

The day off I'd been looking forward to so much ended up in shambles.

We were taking the day off to rest, but instead we wore ourselves out.

"Let's just call it a day..."

Everyone agreed with me.

In the end, my first date was a total failure.

Hero-kun...er, *Yuuga*.

I'm gonna remember this...my grudge won't be forgotten anytime soon.

The next day I was summoned by Celia-san...I wonder if I'm gonna be scolded?

Chapter 6 (part 3): I tried visiting the girl I like when she was sick

Like yesterday, I came to the Aquarain mansion at Celia-san's invitation.

Honestly, I was still wiped from the huge riot yesterday, but...

"...I wonder what she wants from me? 'Guess there's no use thinking about it too much..."

I was probably gonna get lectured. The forced day off for her daughter ended up a huge failure.

I'm scared just thinking about the look she's gonna give me.

I wonder if Sophia-san will tag-team with Celia-san?

That might really be the death of me.

Going in would be super scary.

But I steeled myself and entered the mansion.

"...Captain."

Just like when I came yesterday, Hapyneth guided me through the mansion.

Upon arriving at Celia-san's room, she gave me these parting words,

"...Rest in peace."

Those were her final words as she left.

Just what horrible fate awaits me?

I knock on the door and enter the room.

“Oh my, welcome. You really came.”

Celia-san was smiling just like yesterday...or so I thought, but upon closer inspection she wasn't really smiling at all.

In fact, she was quite livid.

"I'm sorry to say that Cecilia is sick in bed today. The ruckus from yesterday was more than she could take. When she came home she immediately collapsed."

I am shocked, and quickly jump off the sofa and get closer to Celia-san to get more details.

“Cecilia fainted!? Is she alright!?”

"Calm yourself. She's resting in her room right now."

Celia-san calmed me down and I collapsed to my knees.

“I can't believe it...”

I can't believe Cecilia fainted.

It's all my fault. I feel the soul crushing guilt enveloping me.

"Now now, don't be too hard on yourself. She's just a little under the weather. The healer said if she gets a few days of bedrest she'll be right as rain."

Even though it wasn't a bad cold, *I'm* the reason she came down with it...

I can't help but worry about her.

"...Is that so? That's good then..."

For now, I need to calm down.

Getting all worked up won't help Cecilia recover any faster.

"I'm not really angry with you, Youki-kun. It was *I* who asked you to accompany Cecilia. In fact, the one I'm really angry with is the Hero."

Looks like Celia-san knows the true culprit behind yesterday's events. Her smile suddenly turned cold as ice.

"In fact, the Hero came by a little earlier. I don't know how he got wind of her condition, but he offered to nurse her back to health."

Celia-san's smile became even more dangerous.

It may have just been my imagination, but the room suddenly seemed a lot colder...

"As if I would allow the perpetrator who ruined my adorable daughter's day off to do so. I'm not such a forgiving woman. So I *politely* declined

and sent him home."

Celia-san ominously chuckles.

Even though she wasn't talking about me, I still got a chill.

He got what he deserved, but I still feel a *little* sorry for him.

I'm sure it was a very frightening experience.

"However, it was different for you. As I said earlier, *I* was the one that asked you to escort her, so you're not at fault. Even Cecilia said that you did your best to make her day fun."

"Cecilia said that about me?!"

Dammit, if Yuuga and Mikana hadn't come along, that date would have been a total success!

My luck was seriously bad yesterday.

"It's really too bad about yesterday. But if there's another chance, I'll ask you to accompany her again. It seems Cecilia wasn't quite satisfied with how things ended either."

I wonder if that's why Celia-san wanted me to come by today?

Thinking I was depressed, Cecilia may have wanted to cheer me up.

Well, I *hope* that's the real reason.

"Cecilia's not the only one who thought that. Given the chance, I'd gladly take her out again."

Yesterday was certainly a disappointment, but I'll make sure the next one is a success.

Celia-san smiles at my response.

"If you like, I'll let you see Cecilia for a little bit before you go home. It's almost time for lunch, so she should wake up soon."

She's still sick, so I wonder if it's a good idea to disturb her. But if it's just for a bit, I'd like to pay her a visit while she's not feeling well.

I knock on Cecilia's door and enter her room. Cecilia is sleeping in bed in her nightgown.

She has a fever so her face is a bit flushed.

"Youki-san, you're here... I'm sorry you have to see me like this..."

She's having a hard time speaking.

Is she really just 'a little under the weather'?

As I thought, I should keep my visit short.

"Don't worry about it, I'll be out of here soon. I just wanted to apologize for yesterday. You finally had a day off, and then..."

I was going to talk about how it was a disaster, but Cecilia spoke first,

"...Youki-san, you did nothing to apologize for. Yesterday...all of us were really at fault."

I shared some of the responsibility, but it's was *mostly* Yuuga's fault.
It's just like Cecilia, not putting the blame on anyone.

...She's way too nice.

But is it really okay to just leave things like that?

"No, it's really my bad."

Her day off was ruined, and her health was compromised.

That is the truth of the matter.

She was trying to not let me blame myself, but this is just who I am.

No matter how many cheats I have, I'm still the same as I was before my reincarnation.

"...Then I'll blame Youki-san for everything."

"Yep, that's right, it's all my fault...eh?"

Just a minute ago she said no one was to blame, now she did a 180 and laid everything on me.

"Youki-san is to blame for wasting my entire day off. ...So please make up for it by doing a good job with the next one, okay?"

...Isn't this like a promise to have a second date?

A switch flipped inside of me.

"...Heh, just leave everything to me, babe. Yesterday may have ended in failure, but don't think it will happen again! I will show you the time of your life, you can count on it!"

With a boisterous and self-confident laugh, I ended my speech with my signature pose. It made Cecilia smile.

With this, I think we became a little closer.

Suddenly, I was grabbed firmly by the arms.

Who the hell is ruining my glorious exit?

When I looked, I saw...

"Youki-sama, My Lady is sick. I ask that you please remain quiet while you are in her room...let's have a little talk, shall we? Please excuse us, My Lady."

Sophia-san stood there completely expressionless.

Oh shit, I wanna run, but the aura she's giving off says I don't stand a chance.

Sophia-san gave a quick and beautiful bow, then kept hold of me by the arms and dragged me out of the room.

Cecilia just smiled and waved at me.

I hope she gets well soon, I think as I smile and wave back at her.

After that, I was thoroughly reprimanded by Sophia-san.

Note: Ciph, dude, chillax man, fr srs bro -Solistia

Chapter 7 (part 1): I tried giving a friend love advice

It's been a few days since Cecilia recovered from being sick.

Today I came to the guild to work, but...

"He~ey, guess wha~at, lately the little woman has been in a su~uper good mood~"

"I didn't know that..."

How did I get roped into listening to Clayman gush about his wife?

His eyes that were always like a dead fish's are sparkling today.

This usually taciturn guy has completely turned into a giggling schoolgirl. Honestly, it's a pain in the ass..

All the other employees and adventurers I see are avoiding looking at us.

Seems he's been like this all day.

The employees are sighing deeply, and the adventurers are keeping their eyes glued to the table.

Looks like I'm not the only victim here.

...Come to think of it, this guy is married? Congrats man. Just what kind of lady would fall for this sorry sod?

I can't imagine it working out if she wasn't completely complacent.

"I never realized what a great place this was to work. Everyone has been su~uper nice today."

"Uh-huh."

She must be a great wife to make him that happy. If I got married to Cecilia and everyday was full of bliss... Ah, stop stop!

I think I'd end up with the same girly smile in his position.



So I had to listen to him gush about his wife for a long while.

From the reactions I could see of those still in the Guild hall, they'd all heard the same story.

Just when I'd had about enough of this nonsense, there was a commotion at the guild entrance.

I could hear cheers of joy from the previously sullen employees and adventurers who had been face-planted on the tables.

"What's up? It's pretty noisy."

Clayman leaned out over the reception desk to check out what was going on at the guild entrance.

I'm getting a sense of déjà vu here.

Could it be... Cecilia?!

With my hopes high, I turn around and see...

"....."

...Raven standing there.

He avoids people with hand and body gestures and heads in my direction.

Coming towards me, he jerked his thumb towards the guild entrance.

It looks like he has something to tell me, but he doesn't want to talk with other people around.

I totally get it.

"Clayman, I want to take a quest with Raven, are there any good ones available?"

He probably wanted to go questing with me.

We finally became friends, but never got to hang out together since he spent his time training.

Raven tugged on my sleeve.

You wanna get out of here that quickly, huh?

I guess the guild is making a lot of noise.

Most of it is jeering towards me though.

It's mainly coming from the women, and even the guild employees.

"Oooh, how 'bout this one? There's a quest to defeat a rampaging rock dragon at the foot of Haggars Mountain. If you take a carriage together, you can probably make it back before the day's over."

It's a B-rank mission, and it would just be Raven from the Hero Party and me who just recently become B-rank, but with me having my Cheat we should be fine. ...We could probably even take a higher ranking mission and still be fine.

Accepting the quest, Raven and I head to Haggars Mountain.

"Eh...you didn't want to do a quest?"

It would take 2 hours by carriage to get to Haggars Mountain from Minerva, so we were looking for a carriage headed in that direction.

There were a lot of people around, so we were conversing quietly.

"...I wanted to go out shopping with you. Maybe grab a bite to eat..."

Apparently Raven just wanted to hang out around town.

I mistook it as him wanting to hunt out of town.

Speaking of which, our equipment might be a bit too light for this quest.

"Sorry for the misunderstanding."

I lower my head in a sincere apology. Raven worked as a knight in the castle, so this was probably a rare day off.

"....No, it's okay. It's just the first outing I've ever had with a friend."

Looks like all is forgiven.

I'm glad Raven has such a big heart.

"I got it, let's finish up the quest real quick, then hang out afterwards. If we give it our all, we should make it back by sundown."

"....I see. Let's do that."

Still, there are things we gotta do before then.

Today, Raven was out in casual clothes, not disguising himself at all.

How reckless can you be?

I don't want to go through another huge fiasco, so I should warn him.

"But before we hang out, there is something I absolutely must tell you, okay?"

Not understanding, Raven tilted his head.

"As a member of the Hero party, if you just walk casually around in the city, you're gonna cause a commotion. Didn't you hear about when the whole Hero Party, aside from you, were caught in the Accessory Shop and it turned into a huge mess just recently?"

I never want to go through that again.

It wiped me out and caused a lot of trouble for the shop.

"....I heard about it. I was wondering what Yuuga and the others were up to. I never would've thought a riot would start with Mikana and Cecilia there..."

Raven has no room to talk.

He wanted to go out on the town without a thought about his fame.

He should know the fangirls of the Hero Party would immediately intercept our little outing.

"I'll lend you the disguise I have. Once you're all set, we can hang out. Well, I say disguise, but it's just hiding your face..."

I should get something to commemorate my first date with Cecilia.

I wasn't able to buy the accessory for her that day, and hadn't had a chance to buy it afterwards.

Exiting the carriage, we head for Hagers Mountain.

If we hurry there, we can cover the distance in a dozen or so minutes.

We travel to the mountain in silence to save our stamina.

The path to Haggars Mountain was steep, and we were attacked by monsters, a Lizardman and a Roc, on the way.

The Lizardman, as the name might imply, was a reptilian humanoid that used a sword and shield.

The Roc was a huge, hawk-like monster.

With Raven's sword and my magic, the enemies weren't a big deal at all.

Even so, we didn't know when and where enemies would come from. We both stayed on our guard and continued in silence, however...

"....Youki, after we're done with this quest, I need your advice on something."

Raven suddenly opened his mouth.

...Don't drop lines that'll trigger your death flag!

But, if it's Raven I'm sure he'll be fine.

"Sure thing. Let's hurry and kill this thing then."

Just then, something stomped in our direction with a huge thudding sound.

....Wait, is this really the death flag at work?

"Here it comes, get ready!"

Raven drew his sword from its sheath and took up a stance.

As a magic user I didn't have a weapon, so I just stood at the ready.

As we did, our target, the Rock Dragon, appeared.

"Here we go. 《Storm Blow》!"

Storm Blow is an Intermediate level magic that, while small in scale, has the power of a tornado.

Hitting the Rock Dragon with this skill, it shaves off some of the hard rock armor.

And thus, it exposes the skin underneath.

"Yes!"

Raven slashed at the exposed skin.

After being cut, the dragon flew into a rage but Raven carefully dodged, and continued to wound the monster with his sword.

The Rock Dragon was unintelligent, so as long as we remained vigilant we wouldn't get hit.

Even though it's called a dragon, it wasn't much of an opponent.

We kept at it, and safely slew the dragon. ...Thank goodness, the death flag wasn't triggered after all.

"Good work. I'm glad we got it over with quickly."

I released my magic, and as Raven sheathed his sword and said,

"...Oh right. Let's leave the Rock Dragon's corpse to the guild staff and just take some proof with us."

The Rock Dragon is huge, there's no way we can deal with the corpse by ourselves, so we just bring back a trophy from it.

"Then let's hang out when we get back."

After that, we descended Hagers mountain, boarded the carriage and headed back to Minerva.

After getting back to the guild and reporting on our quest, we head for my room at the Inn.

On the way there was a small fuss, but thanks to my previous experience we were able to escape.

"Here are some glasses and a hat. ...It's quite late already, so we can't do much except get a bite to eat."

I handed Raven the disguise I had gotten from Cecilia.

"....Aah, this'll help a lot."

He donned the hat, and put on the glasses.

....It kinda suits him.

I guess it's true pretty boys look good, no matter what they wear.

The world is so unfair.

Still, at least he shouldn't be found out.

Having a sword might expose him, so we left it in my room.

We walked for about 10 minutes to the eatery.

“...Come to think of it, didn't you have something you wanted to talk about?”

I asked while eating my dinner.

If I remember right, just before we got ambushed by the Rock Dragon he wanted advice on something.

“...Aah, you'll hear me out?”

I wonder what it's about, something to do with his voice?

Did someone say something to him?

“The truth is, I've fallen in love with someone.”

Unexpectedly, he wanted some love advice.

Author's Note: The next chapter will follow Raven-kun.

Chapter 7 (part 2): I tried giving a friend love advice

"You have someone you...*like*?"

I couldn't believe my buddy Raven wanted to ask for *love advice* while we were having dinner together.

"Sorry, Youki. You're the only one I could ask..."

Since he didn't speak much due to his voice, Raven came across as a cool and taciturn character.

If the people around him heard that he had done something so out of character like falling in love, he'd be a laughing stock.

"Yeah..."

And now he's seeking love advice from someone who's struck out on every single love confession over the course of two lives, much less actually gone out with someone.

...Man, I've got a bad feeling about this.

He's asking the wrong person for advice, you know? But I'm still the only one he can ask.

"Tell me, what kind of girl is she?"

I didn't want to give him the cold shoulder since we'd just become friends, so I'll take a shot at giving him advice just this once.

"...She didn't make fun of my voice. She actually thought it sounded nice, and said she was jealous. And then..."

TL Note: Doesn't laugh at voice = BFF or Love Interest....sounds legit

I see. Raven has such a big complex about his voice, I'm sure it made him really happy. Usually people laugh or are surprised at the gap between his appearance and his voice.

"I see, so that's why you fell for her."

It's a more normal love discussion than I thought it would be.

Raven's embarrassment was written all over his red face and cheeks.

"...What do you think I should do?"

From his red face and nervousness, it seems like he's fallen pretty hard.

He's like a middle schooler going through puberty. But because of his voice, forget girls, he couldn't even make a single *guy* friend. He's just lived by the sword all this time.

He's never had anyone to talk to about things like this before.

"If you like her, have you tried confessing?"

He was a member of the Hero Party that saved the world.

He's good looking, and he'd already cleared the hurdle of his odd voice, so I can only imagine he'd get a positive response.

"...I don't think I can. Since I was born I've only ever lived for the sword. Girls are..."

I figured it was something like that.

Geez, you're a good-looking guy, have more confidence!

It can't be helped; I might die a little inside, but it's for a friend.

For the first time in a while, I switch up my game.

"Heh, Raven, you haven't realized it yourself yet, have you?"

I make a grand gesture, pointing at Raven.

Raven is confused by my sudden change of character.

But I don't stop there.

"A handsome visagé, tall in stature, saving the world as the knight of the Hero Party. So what if your voice is a little strange? You should be capable of ignoring anyone who might laugh at you!"

Raven was listening, but looked like he'd been blindsided.

However, I'm not done yet!

"Why, just look at me! A boring face, an average build, working for a guild. Even so, I've confessed countless times! Gotten rejected countless

more! But look at me now! Do I look miserable to you? Not in the slightest! ...Raven, you'll do great. Believe in yourself!"

Of course I finish it off with my signature pose.

...Aaah, that was refreshing.

I turn off my Chuuni-mode, and wait for Raven's response.

"...Heeh. I see. So it was something like that."

Raven calmed down, and was laughing a bit.

"...I guess I was overthinking it. Thanks, I'm glad I asked for your advice, Youki."

Oooh!

Seems like my plan worked.

Thank goodness.

I didn't know what I would do if he gave up.

"Hahaha... If you say it like that, *I'm* the one who's glad I gave you advice."

"...Actually, I'm taking tomorrow off as well. I'll try to confess to her. If it's okay with you, I'd really like you to come with me."

I see, he was worried about that.

He had been in a very negative frame of mind.

He had gathered up all his courage and opened the very depths of his heart to his friend.

I was so moved, how could I *not* support him?

"You'll be fine. ...Give it your best shot tomorrow."

With those parting words, we went our separate ways.

The next day, I waited for Raven at the reception desk in the Guildhall.

The Guildhall was noisy and bustling with activity, more so than usual.

The excitement of Raven being there yesterday still lingered. When he comes today, he should be properly disguised so there won't be another riot.

"...Hey, ain'tcha gonna take a quest today?"

Clayman asked me. His happy-mode from yesterday had been replaced by his usual lackadaisical-mode.

"I'm waiting for a friend today. No quests."

Normally, all the other adventurers would ask the pretty ladies at the other reception desks for quests. I was pretty much the only one who came to the apathetic receptionist's, Clayman's, desk.

That's why no one would complain if I loitered around Clayman's desk. Rather, I was their savior yesterday.

"Well that's just *great*, no work for *me*. Why don't you just stay there all day *doing nothing*?"

"Why do you sound so bummed about spending all day not having to lift a finger? I'm just waiting for a friend."

Clayman and I yak about nothing in particular, when suddenly I'm grabbed by the shoulder and turned around.

There stood Raven wearing the disguise I gave him yesterday.

Maybe it's because he's nervous, but his expression is awfully stiff.

Hey now, we haven't even gotten to the girl's home yet, is he really gonna be okay...?

"You okay? Did you sleep at all last night?"

Raven nodded his head, but even that gesture was stiff.

If we stayed in the guild like this he'd be found out, so I hurry us outside.

Raven is frozen solid, so in order to loosen him up, I take a deep breath and say,

"Listen up, Raven. You're a member of the hero party and a leader of knights. That already makes you a really amazing guy. You can do this, Raven!"

On our way to his sweetheart, I give him some encouragement.

If he can just get a little more confidence, he should be able to confess naturally.

“...Should I really be doing this?”

He's still debilitatingly shy.

I gave him encouragement all the way to the girl's home.

And then, after Raven finally became resolved, our destination turned out to be...

"Eh....?!"

No way, we're at the Aquarain mansion?

Does he like Cecilia?!

She's so nice, there's definitely a chance.

I can think of a million things that might have happened between them on their mission to defeat the Demon Lord.

Did the death flag he raised yesterday mean I was gonna kill him for taking my girl?!

"...You have my gratitude, Youki. It's thanks to you that I have the courage to confess. ...I'll go by myself from here. Please wait for me, Youki."

Raven entered the Aquarain manor alone.

...This is bad!

Would Cecilia accept his confession...what would she do?

I have no idea what kind of relationship they have, so I have no idea how she'll respond.

I panic for a few minutes while I wait outside the Aquarain mansion. But when Raven returned, he had a pretty grave look on his face.

"...She turned me down. She said it was 'impossible'. ...Youki, I'm so sorry, even after you went out of your way give me all that advice. ...As I thought, it wasn't meant to be with her..."

This isn't good, his eyes are as dead as Clayman's.

His first broken heart dealt quite the emotional damage.

I totally understand, I've had more than my fair share of broken hearts.

But he's my friend, I can't just leave him like this.

"Don't let it bother you too much, man. Anyway, why don't we go somewhere? You're still on holiday, and we didn't get to pal around town much yesterday..."

He heard me, but just shook his head, and said sadly,

"...Let's just call it a day. See ya...later..."

Shoulders drooped despondently, Raven headed back to town.

I couldn't help but watch him as he got smaller in the distance.

...What do I do?

I should be celebrating, but the whole thing left a bad taste in my mouth.

I should be happy to have one less rival, but those feelings never surfaced.

Friendship or love...I couldn't bring myself to give up either.

I was both relieved that Cecilia wasn't stolen away from me, and sad for my friend whose love couldn't come to fruition.

“...I gotta talk to Cecilia.”

I have to know why my friend was rejected.

I might be meddling, but I enter the mansion to find out the reason my friend was turned down.

Chapter 7 (part 3): I tried supporting my friend's love

“He...didn’t even talk to you?”

I went to see Cecilia to ask why she turned Raven down.

I thought she might be reluctant if I asked her flat out, so I beat around the bush a little, however...

"That's right. Raven-san never came to see me. ...Did something happen?"

What's going on here?

I couldn't figure it out by myself, so I let Cecilia in on the situation.

"...I see, could it be he confessed to someone who works here instead?"

If he confessed to one of the maids, we knew just who to ask.

"Let's ask Sophia-san. She's the head maid, she may just know something."

“I’ll go with you.”

Perhaps because they were once comrades, she was now also worried about Raven.

As expected of the kind Cecilia-san.

We both head to the servant's quarters to find Sophia-san.

"Indeed, Raven-sama was here just a short while ago."

When we arrived at the servant's quarters and asked Sophia-san, it was as Cecilia expected.

He had confessed to one of the employees.

Cecilia inquired with Sophia-san further.

"Then, did he need to speak with someone about something?"

"As I recall...he had something to discuss with one of the maids."

As we thought, it was one of the maids.

Just what kind of girl did he confess to?

"Sophia-san, which girl did he ask for?"

As his friend, I wanted to ask the girl what she found wrong with Raven.

Cecilia was also worried, and we both fidgeted while we awaited Sophia-san's answer.

"The new maid, Hapyneth."

“ ... ”

“ ... ”

We both froze on the spot.

My first friend after reincarnating fell in love with one of my former demon underlings.

Cecilia froze without saying a word.

"...Right! Pardon me, Sophia-san, where would Hapyneth happen to be at the moment?"

I had about a million things to ask Hapyneth. Seeing how impatient I looked, Sophia-san recoiled but quickly composed herself.

"...Right now Hapyneth is scheduled to clean the mansion. The mansion is quite large, I do not know exactly where she will be."

The Aquarain mansion was certainly large, but if I ran around the mansion for a few minutes I should find her.

"Thank you so much Sophia-san. I'll leave Cecilia in your capable hands."

Cecilia was still frozen stiff, so I left her in Sophia-san's care and exited the servant's quarters.

After that I ran around the mansion.

I got a few warnings from the other maids about running, but I just gave them a quick apology and continued on.

I ran about the residence three times and finally found Hapyneth.

She was wearing the maid uniform, and sweeping one of the guest rooms.

I had run by here before, but we must have just missed each other.

"...Been a while."

She gave me a small nod, then went back to her cleaning.

"Wait just a minute."

We hadn't even talked about anything yet, so I grip her shoulder, restraining her.

I finally found her, I'm not letting her off with just a greeting.

"...What?"

"Don't you 'what' me! I'm your former captain. Where'd this attitude come from?"

Aren't you the one that desperately searched for me for a month and a half?

Of course, she had never shown me an ounce of respect, even back when we were in the Demon Lord's castle together.

But that didn't matter right now, I would hold back for the moment, but we would certainly have a good long talk about that later.

"...Problem?"

"Yeah, that's right. Just a little bit ago a good looking guy with a sword at his waist came to you. What did you say to him?"

"...Love confessed, 'Impossible' replied."

She declared with her usual indifferent tone of voice.

Did she turn Raven down the same way?

If she did, that poor guy...

But if I remember right, Raven said she envied his voice at some point.

So that means they met somewhere before.

"You met that swordsman somewhere. Could you tell me when and where you met?"

Hapyneth looked shocked that I would ask such a thing.

But she quickly whirled around, turning her back to me.

"...Impossible."

Refusing to answer, Hapyneth ran away, broom in hand.

I went to chase after her, but there was probably a reason she couldn't say.

It wouldn't solve anything if I caught her and forced her to tell me.

"...I'll figure something out after I go back."

I relay to Cecilia that I'm headed out, then go back to the guild.

"...and that's what happened."

It was already noon when I made it back to the guild, and the bar was crowded with adventurers getting food.

I make my way to my own personal private seat at Clayman's desk, only to find an armored knight sitting there.

Looks like Duke and Clayman are having a pleasant heart-to-heart.

Seems like they're having fun.

"Ooh~, looks like you have your own set of troubles. If it were me, I'd just f' it all, too much of a hassle."

"What're you guys talking about?"

It made me curious, so I wedged myself in on the conversation.

Clayman and Duke finally took notice of me and gave me a quick greeting.

I couldn't see Duke's expression since he was wearing a helmet, but I got the feeling he was laughing.

"Just a fun story about you, Captain."

Of course he would have omitted any *demonizing* details.

But that wasn't the problem.

"Don't just gossip about someone's past like that!"

There are a mountain of memories I wish I could erase from my dark past.

I can't help but be super worried, wondering which story Duke told him.

Right now, I want to interrogate him, then reprimand him, but this isn't the time for that.

"Good thing I ran into you, Duke. There's something I wanted to ask you, so come with me real quick."

I take him out of the guild and explain the situation.

Duke has known Hapyneth for about as long as I have, give or take a little.

He was quite adept at charming allies.

"Yeah... First, we better get Cecilia-san to help by getting Hapyneth's side of the story. If we don't, Cecilia-san may not be able to help us even if she could."

He's probably right.

But I can't just leave Raven in that state either.

"...Can't be helped, I'll have to go back to Cecilia's place to explain. Let's go, Duke."

"Roger!"

With Duke in tow, I head back to the Aquarain mansion.

We tell Cecilia about Hapyneth's past in her room.

"Well, here's the thing. First, you know Harpy demons are regularly hunted by humans, right?"

Cecilia nodded in acknowledgment.

Harpies are attractive demons, and are often caught and made into slaves, and are endlessly hunted for their feathers.

By the way, I forgot to mention it before, but I didn't sell off the feathers I plucked from Hapyneth; I still had them in my possession.

"Of course Hapyneth was no exception. She was being chased by hunters to a place I just happened to be patrolling. I saved her, and she became one of the Captain's underlings."

Cecilia had a complicated expression on her face.

She was a human just like those hunters.

It wasn't a very pleasant story.

"At first she didn't speak at all. Even now she's still not very talkative."

At first she could only communicate by nodding or shaking her head.

The trauma was considerable.

"That's why I think even if a human said he loved her...she wouldn't have any good feelings about it..."

It makes sense, I feel the same way having known her for so long.

But still, Hapyneth shouldn't think so badly of Raven.

"Then, why did she say she was jealous of Raven-san's voice?"

"Harpy's are originally a race that like to sing, so it could be she was charmed by his voice, but..."

But we still don't know how the two of them met.

Anything more than that, we could only guess at.

We were in a total deadlock.

"...As for how they met, it may be more prudent to ask Raven instead of Hapyneth."

Hapyneth refused to answer earlier.

And she can be quite stubborn when she wants to.

Knowing her personality, Duke agrees.

Cecilia also nodded her approval at my idea.

"Then we're done here for today. I'll stop by Raven's place on the way home."

Deciding on the next course of action we adjourn our little impromptu meeting, and I head for the Knight's Dormitory where Raven lives.

Arriving at the Knight's Dormitory I wonder just how many people live here.

It could probably house a few hundred knights; it's a gigantic dormitory. When I entered I saw a reception desk, and someone who looked like a Dorm Manager there.

Upon seeing me, she asked what business I had here.

"Excuse me, I actually came here to meet with my knight friend who lives here..."

The Dorm Manager was a normal lady who looked good in glasses.

"Just to confirm, what is the name of the knight whom you are looking for? And if you could give me your name as well?"

I gave her my name, and then, when I mentioned Raven's name, she pushed up her glasses and gave me a very doubtful look.

Well, Raven is famous after all, and he's not really known to have many friends, so I understand her suspicion.

But even so, she still went to go confirm and left for the dorm interior. After a few minutes I could hear briskly walking footsteps as the Dorm Manager returned with a beautiful stride.

"I have confirmation. Please allow me to guide you to Raven-sama's room."

I follow after the Dorm Manager until we make it to Raven's room.

The Dorm Manager left with a 'please take your time', and returned to the reception desk.

"Raven, I'm coming in."

I knocked and opened the door.

His room was dark, dank, and dreary.

Raven was in the center of the room lying lifeless on his bed.

...He was severely depressed, that much was obvious.

It was his first love after all.

Raven finally noticed I was there and got up from the bed.

"...Youki? Sorry about before. And after you invited me out too."

"No, it's fine. ...Actually I have something I want to ask you."

He may not want to talk about it, but I wanted to support my friend in love.

I'll use any means to elicit an answer out of him.

"I want you to tell me exactly how you met the girl you fell for."

"...What would it change even if you knew?"

He murmured, coming off as though it was all too bothersome.

Shit, he's turning into Clayman, I gotta do something!

"It's too early to give up now! There might be something we can do if we work together. Please, just tell me."

He finally gave in to my pestering.

Little by little Raven revealed the story.

Man, it wasn't surprising *at all*...

Chapter 7 (part 4): I tried helping my friend

Apparently he first met Hapyneth on the day I was out with the rest of the Hero Party when we caused that huge commotion in town.

Raven worked as the Captain of the Knights, but he couldn't communicate with words, so he usually patrolled the imperial city by himself.

Since so many problems were occurring that day, he was patrolling around all the back alleys.

"...Hm. Nothing amiss here."

And as he was about to patrol elsewhere, he heard some hoodlums nearby.

He immediately headed for the voices, and saw Hapyneth cornered by a small gang of thugs.

He easily wiped the floor with them, and was about to leave when, "..."

Hapyneth had grabbed onto his sleeve, causing him to stop.

"...Thank you."

She thanked him very quietly.

"...Just doing my job."

Usually, when Raven was thanked he would just nod his head in acknowledgement, but he mistakenly replied instead.

Just when he thought his life was over, Hapyneth opened her eyes in surprise.

Raven thought he would be ridiculed, however,

"...Wonderful voice."

Is what she said.

Raven had been made fun of, but never complimented.

So, feeling a little funny, he spoke further and asked a question.

"...You're not gonna make fun of my voice? My voice is really..."

He suddenly asked.

I mean, / didn't make fun of his voice, but I didn't compliment it either.

"...Jealous."

"...Eh?"

Raven wasn't finished talking to her, but she took off in a flash.

Raven still had other places to patrol, so he couldn't afford to chase after her.

And so, unable to forget about maid uniform-clad Hapyneth, he began to investigate which household she might work for based on her uniform and finally found it.

Then, he asked me for advice, and after giving him my support, he confessed, which brings us to today.

"...Are we done now?"

After finishing his story, Raven looked really tired.

Raven was, no, *Hapyneth* was the first to show interest in the other party, I'm sure of it.

...Couldn't they at least be friends?

But for the time being, I've got to get Raven out of here before he starts sprouting mushrooms.

I'll go to Duke's place and tell him the information I got about Hapyneth.

"Raven, let's get you out of here. I know a guy who's acquainted with your maid girl, let's go see him."

I'm 'acquainted' with her as well, but...

Raven didn't want to go at first, but after half-dragging him along, we went looking for Duke.

Duke was at Cecilia's home when our little meeting adjourned, so I thought he'd either head to the inn or the guild. On a hunch, I took us to the guild, and there was Duke.

"Huh? Well if it isn't the Captain...is that the bloke that confessed to Hapyneth?"

Noticing Raven, Duke gave him a look over.

Duke views Hapyneth as a precious comrade after all, so he was just making sure Raven wasn't a bad guy.

Duke had always had a strong sense of duty where his comrades were concerned.

"...Youki, is this the guy that knows her? ...And what was that 'Captain' thing all about?"

Raven asked me with a whisper.

"It's kind of a nickname. But that's not important right now..."

The Guild noticed Raven and started in on the hysterics. I don't want all hell breaking loose on me now.

"You two, let's get out of here."

I grab them both by the wrist, and head for my room at the inn as fast as my legs could carry me.

"Captain, you're way too fast~"

"...I agree."

We finally arrived at the inn after jetting it out of the guild before a commotion could break out, but running at full speed left the other two exhausted.

I accidentally ran too fast, but these two should be trained for that kind of thing, they shouldn't be running on empty already.

But more importantly...

"Raven, your voice..."

After Raven realized what he'd done, he clamped his mouth shut.

And with Duke nearby of all things.

Duke actually didn't seem to care about Raven's voice, but asked why we reacted that way.

And so we let him in on Raven's story.

"I don't really mind at all...So, is it you? The guy that likes Hapyneth?"

"...Yeah."

Raven paused before he answered.

Wh-what's with the tense atmosphere?

These guys, there's no need for pretense here!

"Hapyneth was my former colleague. She has a certain trauma when it comes to dealing with men. You, would you be able to cure Hapyneth of that?"

Making it just men in general instead of humans, I suppose that's the way it's gotta be.

It makes sense, since she isn't afraid of Cecilia or Sophia-san at all.

"...I don't know."

There was another pause after he answered.

I suppose it was understandable since they'd barely met.

But that's still not good enough.

"What?! That's where you're supposed say something cool like 'I will heal her fragile heart!' You are a worthless piece of shit. *That's* why your confession was rejected by Hapyneth!"

"...What's that supposed to mean?"

Duke's words were like a slap in the face, and Raven immediately put his hand to his sheathed sword, ready to draw it.

"Oh, you wanna go at it? I don't know much about that Hero Party nonsense, but I'm not gonna lose."

Duke drew his sheathed sword, and stood at the ready.

...Are these guys idiots?

We're in my rented room at the Inn, a room that can barely squeeze six people into it!

It wouldn't be funny if they started a sword-fight here.

I'll get chased out of the inn if I don't stop these two!

"Chill out guys! If you're gonna fight, do it somewhere else! This is *not* what we got together for."

I brought Duke along to *help* Raven, and now they're at each other's throats.

After begging them to stop, they finally put their swords away, but they were still glaring daggers at each other.

"...Hmph, This is ridiculous. I'll comply with Captain, but *next time* we'll settle this."

"...Indeed."

They both seemed satisfied with that.

Now I don't have to worry about getting kicked out of the inn.

"Now then, back to the subject of Hapyneth. You said you didn't know if you could cure Hapyneth of her trauma. That's not good enough."

"...I know."

Raven agreed with Duke.

After calming down, Raven himself realized he lacked the resolve he needed.

"Why don't you start as friends first? I think it'd be a good idea for you to get to know Hapyneth a little more."

That's my Duke!

He gave Raven some solid advice.

Raven seemed satisfied with that too, and nodded his head in agreement.

However, I felt like I'd turned completely invisible to them.

They'd laugh together, they'd arguing together; all in an unending loop.

They were off in their own little world.

I was completely left out, relegated to being a mere spectator.

After a while, their conversation finally came to an end.

"Go show me you're a man! Good luck getting your feelings across to Hapyneth."

"...I will, I feel like I can do it now."

They gave each other a firm handshake.

Honestly, I have no idea how things turned out like this.

Were those two always like this?

I guess love can change both humans and demons.

...What am I even thinking about?

They left for the Aquarain mansion all jazzed up after their conversation.

I was also curious how this would all play out and tagged along.

When we got to the mansion, we were in luck as Hapyneth was cleaning out in front of the gate.

Heartened by Duke, Raven approached Hapyneth.



Noticing us, Hapyneth stopped cleaning for the moment.

"...Please be my friend."

His face was red from embarrassment, and his nerves were so bad he was shaking. Even though his voice was weak, it took all he had just to get that much out.

And Hapyneth's answer,

"...Just friends."

After that, silence lingered between them.

And then, with their faces flushed, they both sprinted off at full speed, Hapyneth to the mansion, and Raven to the main road.

All that remained was a satisfied Duke, and me completely dumbfounded.

Well, I'm sure Raven was also satisfied, now that Hapyneth could gradually become used to human men.

Afterwards I head that Cecilia indirectly urged Hapyneth in that direction.

I had thought Hapyneth agreed a little too easily, but it made sense after hearing Cecilia was giving her encouragement.

And so it seems Hapyneth herself wasn't completely against the idea, since she wasn't forced.

As I thought, I was right that Hapyneth was charmed by his voice.

I'm looking forward to seeing how things develop between them.

By the way, after this, Duke became quite attached to Raven.

TL Note: (◡‿◡) heh heh heh -Solistia (The BL Addict) After the whole incident, they really *did* duke it out.

Although Duke is a great swordsman, even he couldn't win against Raven, but it was quite a good battle I heard. Because of that, Raven used his authority as Captain of the Knights to recruit Duke.

However, this meant Sheik and I were the only ones left at the inn.

"Captain~ Let's play~"

Sheik was clinging to my body.

"Eey, leggo! I've got a quest to do. Hapyneth, Duke, come back!"

This is the worst thing that could possibly happen. With them gone, I was the only one left to babysit Sheik!

Chapter 8: I tried going to a village

“Haaah...”

I dropped a heavy sigh. Presently, I was rocking about inside in the Aquarain family carriage. With an unchanging scenery outside the window, the carriage was running steadily up the mountain road. And next to me was my beloved Cecilia.

Our destination was the mountain village, Dagaz, a 6-hour carriage ride from Minerva.

Just a little getaway, alone with Cecilia. ...Is what I would have liked it to be.

"Wheee~! My first carriage ride~!"

For some reason Shiek was also here. He was hanging his head outside the window like a dog on the highway. As to how this all came about, let's go back a little in time to this morning.

“...Morning already?”

I got up from my bed in my rented room at the inn. Light trickled in through the window, signaling the start the of the day.

Looking at the bed next to mine, Shiek was gone. That guy who always slept in the most awkward positions was suddenly missing.

I wasn't woken up, and he didn't bother to wake me...where on earth could he have gone?

"Yeesh, after Hapyneth and Duke left it's been one thing after another..."

Since Hapyneth was abducted by Sophia-san, and Duke was taken by Raven, I alone was left to be Shiek's guardian-cum-playmate.

Back when we were in the Demon Castle, the three of us shared that duty. However, I can't help that they're already gone. They won't come back no matter how much I might complain.

Today I had promised to meet with Cecilia. I made myself presentable, then left the Inn and headed to the Aquarain family mansion.

"I'm so sorry. I was suddenly called in for work. And after I was the one that invited you over for tea, too."

...Is what I heard upon arriving at the mansion. Apparently some cleric work came in for her to do. She was already getting ready to leave in the carriage. Some bandits had descended upon a mountain village, and although they were chased off, a large number of serious injuries had been suffered.

The bandits could attack again at any time, and with no trained clerics in the vicinity they wouldn't be able to recover in time. That is what Cecilia reasoned from the information she was given.

"It can't be helped if it's for work... Oh wait, I know! Take me with you!"

I had already been looking forward to spending all day with Cecilia since yesterday, so why not? Not only that, I wanted to be useful to her as well.

"...But, this is a job I have accepted. I couldn't possibly impose on you, Youki-san..."

"Oh my, I'm sure it would be fine, wouldn't it dear?"

As Cecilia was being reluctant, Celia-san suddenly appeared from behind.

"It could be dangerous if bandits appear again. I'm sure my Cecilia would be fine by herself, however, just in case, please take Youki-kun with you."

Cecilia thought about it for a moment. Celia-san wanting someone to accompany her daughter was a big deal.

"...I understand. As Youki-san is also capable of using healing magic, he should be sufficient as a bodyguard. I'm sorry to impose upon you, but would you please accompany me, Youki-san?"

She asked me as if she thought I might refuse, not that she had to be so formal about it.

This was a chance given to me by Celia-san. I'll make sure to show off all my good points, and trigger events to raise her approval.

"With pleasure, I would love to accompany you."

After hearing more details, it looked like we'll be staying at our destination for a short while. Two, maybe three days lodging in the village.

Because of that, since I had no change of clothes on me, I had to run back to the inn to gather my luggage.

"All right, I'll be right back."

I waited until Cecilia and Celia-san were out of sight, then I booked it to the inn. Upon arriving at the Inn, I quickly gathered my things, and headed back to the mansion at full speed. Up to this point, I thought it was gonna be a small little getaway with just me and Cecilia.

"Wheee~"

For some reason, when I got back to the mansion, I found Shiek already inside the carriage. Cecilia was also in the carriage, while Celia-san wore a troubled smile that said something like 'Oh my, oh my, whatever shall we do'.

Seeing me, Celia-san quickly made her way to me and whispered,

"I'm so sorry, Youki-kun. Just after you left for the inn, Shiek came by. After we told him what was going on, he said he wanted to go too."

Apparently, Shiek was just passing by the mansion. I had been wondering where he wandered off to this morning, however... If I'd any idea he'd come by the mansion... If only I could have gotten here earlier, or took some shortcuts or something!

"Both Cecilia and I tried to appeal to him that it would be very dangerous, but Shiek-kun started throwing a fit, and in the end we conceded."

I knew Shiek to be very bull-headed. Older women were especially weak to his young, boyish crying face. That little twerp Shiek, once he's set his sight on something, he gets it.

"Ah man...Guess there's no helping it. Even *I'm* not capable of persuading that kid."

Even with Hapyneth and Duke, between the three of us there were still times we couldn't get Shiek to listen. I'll just chalk it up to having bad luck today.

"I'm so sorry. Really, I had planned for this to be a short getaway for the two of you..."

Looks like Celia-san and I both had the same plan in mind. But, since Shiek looked like a little kid, it couldn't be helped.

"Well, it doesn't change the fact that I'll be going along with Cecilia. And Shiek is kind of a friend anyway..."

He shouldn't be *too* much of a nuisance. And though he looked the way he does, he's proficient with herbal plants and has medicinal knowledge, so he could help heal the injured. He could also be counted on in a fight.

He wasn't just my underling for show. The truth was, he was plenty powerful in his own right.

"Oh my, is that so? What a relief. Have a safe trip, then!"

And just like that, my conversation with Celia-san ended, and I boarded the carriage.

"Captain~ Did you abandon me on purpose~? You're horrible~"

Shiek clung to me as soon as I got into the carriage and started complaining up a storm. I'm not a Shotacon so I wished he'd hurry up and let me go. Cecilia just cheerfully watched us argue back and forth.

I'm glad that Cecilia didn't seem to mind the extra baggage. Back in my old life I knew plenty of my crushes who would have had a fit over something like this.

"Shall we be on our way then?"

And thus the carriage began its journey to Dagaz village.

And that's how we got to this point.

"Shiek-kun, you really *do* look like a child like that."

And it was true. He was hanging all over the open window just like an over excitable kid. Even though the scenery hadn't changed much at all, he was still having just as much fun looking at everything as when he started.

"Shiek never got out of the castle much either."

When I first set foot outside the castle, I also thought this fantasy world was amazing. Of course it was also in part due to his natural childlike behavior, brimming with curiosity.

"I'm a little relieved you both came with me. I may be done with my work sooner than I anticipated!"

For sure, with my healing magic and Shiek's medicinal knowledge we'd wrap this job up nice and quick. Even on the off chance the bandits *did* attack again, I was certain Shiek could annihilate them on his own.

"Just leave it to us! ...And if we *do* finish early...could we, maybe, go out somewhere, together...?"

"Captain~ Are you gonna go have fun somewhere when we get back~? I wanna go too~"

"..."

I knew Shiek wasn't trying to cockblock me, his smile was too innocent. Cecilia was even looking at him with a happy motherly gaze.

And so, my date proposal having ended in failure, I propped my arm up on the window sill overlooking the unchanging landscape, and drifted off into my own little world.

Chapter 9: I tried meeting with a girl

After traveling the long road, we somehow finally made it to the village of Dagaz. Cecilia went over her preliminary report with us and, according to her, Dagaz was just a small village with a population of only a few hundred people.

To get a good grasp of the situation, we did a once over of the village, and it was in pretty bad shape. Homes were burnt to the ground and there were traces of battle and blood everywhere that needed to be cleaned up in order to make the crop fields usable again.

The people passing by had lost the light in their eyes, their faces were pale, and too many of them were bound in bandages.

"It's worse than we thought. Let's go visit our client, the mayor, at his home first."

In the village was a remarkably large house and I assumed that was the place. So, guided by the villagers, we headed towards his home in order to meet the mayor.

"Oooh! Could it be, the comrade of the Hero who slayed the Demon Lord, Cecilia-sama, has come to save us? Thank you ever so much for coming."

The old man who came out to greet us was the mayor. His head was wrapped in bandages, and his foot dragged behind, seeming to be injured.

"First, let's begin by healing you, Mayor. If you could, I'd like you to gather all the injured people in a central location in the village."

"Of course, Cecilia-sama. ...By the way, who are those people over there?"

The mayor was looking at me and Shiek. Cecilia was wearing cleric robes, but Shiek and I were both in our everyday civilian wear. We looked

like your regular everyday villager and a kid.

"They are my friends, and both have accompanied me to help carry out your request. I can guarantee they are both quite capable, so please rest assured."

The mayor easily accepted Cecilia's assertion about us. Both Shiek and I lowered our heads and looked forward to working with Cecilia to help the village.

Cecilia was depending on me, and the mayor didn't seem like a bad guy. Shiek's expression when he bowed wasn't too bad either. Time to get my hands dirty!

"Leave it to us!"

"Roger that~"

Cecilia quickly cast her healing magic on the mayor, then he got to work gathering all the wounded at the central plaza of the village.

The plaza was filled with all manner of villagers, the men and the women, the young and the old. A large amount of the village's young men were among the wounded.

After healing about half the villagers, Cecilia was already sweating heavily. In contrast, Shiek with his herbal medicines and me with my cheat power were bearing the load far better.

"Cecilia, shouldn't you take a break for a little bit?"

If the healer ran out of magic, it would be like putting the cart before the horse. Worst case scenario, she'd pass out and not wake up until tomorrow.

"Haah...haaah... ...I'm fine, thank you."

She didn't look fine at all, though. Her face was already pale, and she was probably near her limit. I cast the elementary magic 《Holy Bell》 on Cecilia.

"What...wait a...minute..."

It was a spell that caused a magic-induced healing sleep on the target with a holy resonance. It was originally used to lull crying babies to sleep, but due to her fatigue, Cecilia couldn't put up any resistance and fell to the ground, fast asleep.

The villagers around her caused a fuss, but I didn't mind them.

I asked the mayor to prepare a place for Cecilia to stay so she could get some rest.

"I'm sorry. Cecilia is already at her limit for today and needs to rest. Could you arrange some lodging for us?"

The mayor was taken aback by my actions, but my words snapped him out of it.

"...I understand. However, the only inn we have in the village isn't in any shape to accommodate you after suffering some damage from the bandit attacks. But I have an open room in my home, so please take her there to rest."

We had seen the inn burned to the ground when we first took a look around the village, so I had already been meaning to ask where we'd stay the night.

But the mayor was letting us stay in his home. I carried the sleeping Cecilia there, princess style of course.

"Shiek, I'm leaving things to you for a bit."

"You can count on me, Captain~"

Once I left Shiek in charge of the villagers, I carried Cecilia all the way to the mayor's house.

Once I got there, I had the mayor's wife show me to the room, which turned out to be really dusty.

They probably didn't use this room very much. It was a simple room with a dresser and a chair next to the bed, and nothing else.

I laid Cecilia on the bed, then opened the window to air out the room a little.

"She'll probably wake up after she's had a bit of rest. When she does, please ask her to return to the plaza."

Although by the time she wakes up, all the villagers should already be healed. I asked the mayor's wife to relay that to Cecilia, then returned to the plaza to continue healing the villagers.

When almost all the villagers had been healed, Cecilia returned.

She looked incredibly angry.

".....Youki-san. I need to have a few words with you."

With that smile that didn't reach her eyes, I knew Cecilia was *definitely* her mother's daughter. Shiek was scared out of his mind and hid behind me.

But I could only think that her angry face was cute too...and was able to keep my composure.

Not only that, I didn't think I was in the wrong, doing what I did.

"...I will admit that I was wrong for suddenly casting sleep magic on you. *But*, if you had continued to heal people like that, you would have passed out. I didn't want that to happen to you, so I resorted to drastic measures."

Cecilia gave some thought to my words. Shiek couldn't handle the tension in the air between me and Cecilia, and began to cry. He looked so pitiful, I patted his head to reassure him.

"Is that so...you were just thinking of what was best for me and acted on it, Youki-san?"

"Uh, yeah, that sounds about right."

So Cecilia *did* understand my side of the story. The tension dissipated and the mood returned to normal, drawing Shiek out from behind my back.

"Is it over~?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

My words got through, and Shiek was also fine, so I declared this issue to be resolved.

"Youki-san."

"Y-yes?"

Cecilia suddenly muttered a single word and I could only respond hesitantly. I realized that I had let down my guard, and after just a moment, she closed the distance between us.

"Thank you so very much."

She told me with upturned eyes in a pleasant manner. Plus, she added on a beautiful smile. My face flushed bright red, and I unintentionally sank to the floor. A different sort of smile then appeared on Cecilia's face, as though everything went *just as planned*.

She probably meant it as revenge for putting her to sleep, but it was more like a reward for me. And so, with our little argument over, and all the villagers healed up, we went back to the mayor's home.

"Oh, while they're here, why don't we have them take a look at Tiel?"

"She wasn't caught up in the bandit ordeal. And Cecilia-sama must be quite tired, so she doesn't *need* to."

"Is someone still hurt?"

"Ah, no, she's a girl who lives at the edge of town. She wasn't here when the bandits attacked, so she wasn't injured then. It's just that...she's been weak since she was born."

She could be suffering from some kind of disease then.

If I send Shiek, he might be able to alleviate some of her symptoms.

"If you could, please tell us where she lives."

"...Is it really all right? You have my thanks. Tiel lives to the east of the village in the forest."

So in order to see the girl called Tiel, we headed eastward to the forest. Although it was called a forest, it wasn't a large and dreary place like

Othell Forest where I fought the cockatrice. Just calling it the 'woods' would be more appropriate.

About five minutes in, we came upon a little wooden cabin. So I guessed this was that Tiel girl's house then?

"We're coming in~"

Without even knocking, Shiek just entered with his weird little greeting. *Hey, come on now*, I thought to myself as I followed in after him.

The person that lived here must love books. There were numerous shelves absolutely packed with them. Seated on a bed farther back in the room and reading a book must be Tiel-chan. For having just let ourselves in, she didn't seem all that surprised.

"To whom do I owe the pleasure? You do not appear to be from the village?"

When she finished speaking she fell into a coughing fit.



"Forgive us for intruding so suddenly. We came at the mayor's request. I am Cecilia. These two here are my friends, Youki-san and Shiek-kun. We have come to cure you of your malady."

"Is that so?"

Cecilia introduced herself and the rest of us. I thought she'd be surprised, but she replied surprisingly composed.

"Shiek, please check her condition and give her some medicine."

Shiek rushed over to Tiel-chan and took a look at the girl. He pulled out some medicine from his pack and gave it to Tiel-chan.

"Hmm, this medicine looks good, let's give it a go~"

Shiek, you little turd, think about your patient's anxiety when you talk! Tiel-chan stared at the medicine she was given. As I thought, she must be doubtful.

"Don't worry. Shiek talks like that, but when it comes to herbal medicine, he knows what he's doing."

"What do you mean, 'talks like that'~"

"Whatever, shut up!"

Shiek looked at me with a huffy expression. I was just being a good wingman, cut me some slack!

"Excuse me, but I already took it."

During our little comedic routine she had already taken the medicine.

".....And?"

"Let's see, my body does feel a bit more relaxed."

"All right~ Then keep taking these medicines for a while, mm'kay~"

Shiek gave her a plethora of medicines, and instructed her on when and how much to take. It just meant her illness wasn't something that could be cured with a single dose.

"But you sure were lucky~. Since you were away when the bandits attacked~"

It's true, no matter how far her home was from the village proper, it wouldn't have been odd for her to be attacked as well.

"I believe you're mistaken. It's not that I have good luck. The village's Guardian Diety-sama protected me."

Tiel-chan completely changed, her eyes shining and her voice strong. I had thought she was a composed intellectual, but maybe she was more of an eccentric girl?

"Guardian Deity?"

It sounded completely bogus to me. Did they actually have things like that in this world? And even if they did, in a tiny mountain village like this?

"I heard about it from my dearly departed grandmother. A long time ago, when the village was attacked by bandits, the Guardian Deity protected them. And just the other day, I was personally protected by Guardian Deity-sama!"

Tiel-chan looked absolutely enthralled as she regaled us with the tale. Talking like that, we were feeling pulled into her story.

The village had a Guardian Deity legend, and that Guardian Deity protected Tiel-chan.....Nope, I really didn't get it after all.

"So what exactly happened when you were 'protected'?"

I had a feeling that something fishy was going on in that story, and it bothered me enough that I wanted to get to the bottom of it.

"I, too, am curious about that."

"Me too~"

"...I understand. I shall tell you."

And so, to summarize, what we were told was this:

After hearing the legend from her grandmother, every day, without fail, Tiel-chan would take offerings to the Guardian Deity.

In her grandmother's day it was a common practice, but nowadays Tiel-chan was the only one who continued to do so.

On the day the bandits came, she was taking offerings to the Guardian Deity, but on her way home a sudden wave of drowsiness took her. When she finally came to, she found that she was nestled against the

Guardian Deity as she slept, and that was how she escaped the struggle with the bandits.

"Captain~ That sudden wave of drowsiness, could it have been a Dark type magic?"

There was such a spell, the Dark Magic 《Nightmare Sleep》. But that spell not only put the enemy to sleep, it was also supposed to induce nightmares to torment the target.

"...Youki-san. I feel a bit suspicious of this village's Guardian Deity."

"That's not true! Guardian Deity-sama is not suspicious at all!"

As Cecilia began to doubt the Guardian Deity, Tiel-chan retaliated. She seemed to be completely devoted to her Guardian Deity.

"So, where can we find your precious Guardian Deity-sama?"

The best thing to do now was see the real thing for ourselves. Then we might be able to figure out 'Guardian Deity-sama's real intentions.

"Guardian Deity-sama's shrine is nearby. If you doubt him to that extent, I'll take you there myself. Please, follow me."

Maybe it was the work of the medicine she took earlier, but she set out at a brisk pace.

The three of us followed after Tiel-chan and eventually came upon a worn down shrine. The door was half-broken, and the roof was falling apart. Even so, there wasn't a speck of dust or trash to be found. My guess was that the frequent cleaning was Tiel-chan's handiwork.

"Guardian Deity-sama is inside the shrine."

I wondered if there was something like a God doll or statue inside. To make sure it was safe, I carefully opened the door so it wouldn't break further, and found...

"Huh?!"

"Eh?!"

"What the?!"

The object inside was a stone statue. But, no matter how you looked at it, I could only think it must be...

"A Demon Statue?"

I couldn't see anything else inside.

It had a demonic face and two horns growing out of its head. On its body were claws and fangs, and even wings.

There was no way this thing was the Guardian Deity.

The three of us stood there stunned, while Tiel-chan held up her hands in a prayer by the side of the statue.

"This is the Guardian Deity-sama that protected me."

"Actually, I'm getting the feeling this Guardian Deity isn't..."

"I won't stand for any slander against Guardian Deity-sa...ahum, ahum"

Tiel-chan fell into a sudden coughing fit. Even though she took Shiek's medicine, her illness wasn't healed yet. In order to not aggravate her condition further, Cecilia took the girl under her care, and headed back to Tiel-chan's home.

On their way, Cecilia lent the girl her shoulder, and Tiel-chan glared at me. It was a glare that said she wouldn't forgive me if I did anything to the Guardian Deity.

It's not like I was gonna break him, so I wished she'd relax a bit more. I watched the girls until they were out of sight, then the two of us resumed investigating the statue.

"Hey Shiek, I'm not the only one who thinks this thing doesn't really look like some kind of Guardian Deity, right?"

"Ahaha~ Isn't it obvious~? Rather than a God, it'd be more fitting to call it a Demon."

"It really does look like a demon."

"Doesn't it~? If they really made it for the villagers to give thanks to, you would think they would have taken its appearance into account~"

What Shiek said made sense. If you really thought about it, the legend itself sounded strange. If the villagers built this thing to give thanks to their protector, then...

"Could it be that something that looked like *this* really saved the village? I find that hard to believe."

I couldn't see it as anything but a monster. I had no idea what would cause a monster to protect a village. My case was a pretty unique one. Or maybe some human other than me was also reincarnated a long time ago?

"Captain~ Now that I think about it, I think I've seen a guy like this before~"

"What was that?!"

"There was a trap monster, a Gargoyle, in the Demon Castle that looked like this guy~"

"...Now that you mention it..."

I almost forgot about the days I was confined to the Demon Castle.

Gargoyles were monsters that imitated statues in order to attack. There were a lot of adventurers and bandits who fell victim to these guys in the old ruins they inhabited. So why on earth was something that looked like a Gargoyle revered as a God?

"...Is this thing really just a statue? Could it be, it's a *real* Gargoyle?"

As I thought that out loud, the statue looked even more suspicious. Shiek held his dagger at the ready, and I prepared to cast my spells. We were ready to enter battle.

We carefully drew closer, then suddenly its eyes flared to life, and the statue jumped out of the shrine.

Chapter 10: I tried listening to the Guardian Deity's story

Its identity exposed, the gargoyle used the wings on its back to fly into the air.

Identifying us as enemies, he used the intermediate magic 《Dark Gatling》 from the air to attack us. A countless number of dark magic bullets rained down from above. I instinctively ducked behind a tree to avoid the bullet storm.

“Just as I thought, you’re a real gargoyle! What’s up with that Guardian Deity bullshit, you’re just a monster!”

If that gargoyle continued on his rampage, the villagers were bound to notice. If they did, it’d mean all sorts of trouble. I needed to defeat him before he caused pandemonium.

Even though he was flying, I’d have no trouble shooting him down with my magic. Then, as I was thinking about taking him down, I noticed Shiek was no longer by my side. Huh, where’d he go?

I knew how strong Shiek was, and one gargoyle wasn’t enough to bring him down. I looked at my surroundings and soon located Shiek. Using the myriad of trees to his advantage, he agilely jumped from branch to branch.

Shiek may have had wings, but they were useless for actual flight.

That subject was taboo to speak of around Shiek, so we never brought it up.

That's why he was jumping instead.

Then, getting behind the gargoyle, without even using the dagger in his hand, he delivered a swift axe kick.

The fact that the gargoyle had stone skin didn't matter one bit, and just that one attack ended it. The poor gargoyle fell, smack, right onto the ground. The final blow was Shiek making a perfect landing right on top of the creature.

"That's a win for me~"

His smile was so adorable, any ShotaCon that saw it would have definitely had a raging nosebleed. Not being a ShotaCon myself, it didn't much matter to me.

"Captain~ Whadaya wanna do with this guy~"

"Hmm."

We were the ones who readied ourselves for battle in the first place, so I should probably see if we can talk with the guy first.

"Hey you, can you speak? You've got some questions to answer."

With Shiek still standing on top of him, the gargoyle gave us a glare full of hate.

"Come now! If you are going to kill me, then just kill me."

He replied in a pretty calm and defeated voice.

“O~kay!”

“W-w-wait a minute Shiek!”

Shiek was serious, and already had his dagger ready for a swift downward swing on the gargoyle’s neck, so I hastily stopped him. We hadn’t gotten any information out of him yet, so knock it off!

“You have not come to slay me?”

“What, weren’t you the one that attacked us first?”

Well, it was probably our bad, since we were the ones that had prepared for battle, however...

He admitted fault, lowered his head and apologized. Looks like words did get through to this guy.

“Shiek, get off him.”

We might be able to come to an accord, but we wouldn’t get anywhere with the current status-quo.

Shiek hopped off the back of the gargoyle. The gargoyle then righted himself

and massaged his shoulder.

“Hmm, I apologize for my rudeness earlier. Not only did you know my true identity, you were also having a suspicious conversation about the Demon Lord’s Castle. As you lot prepared for battle, I felt I had no choice but to attack.”

So if we hadn’t done anything, we could have started off on the right foot.

“Sorry about that. So, why is a gargoyle like yourself hailed as the Guardian Deity of a village?”

They were normally a monster that guarded ruins and castles, not villages.

“If it’s you lot, I believe I can tell you. Yes, it is a story that occurred several hundred years ago. I was born to protect a certain ruin, so I protected it. But there was not a single treasure in the ruin, thusly it held no appeal to humans.”

That’s true, if there was no treasure to be had in the ruins, I certainly wouldn’t go there.

Shiek wasn’t particularly interested, and began to yawn.

“Since no humans ever came to attack, I was bored every day. After a while I realized I was just sleeping most days.”

“Same as the Captain~”

Although uninterested, Shiek's habit of eavesdropping caused him to suddenly laugh. I may have been a total shut-in, but it's not like I was sleeping the day away every single day.

"I am unsure of what you are referring to, but I'll continue. It happened one fine day. I was wondering if any humans would finally come, and started to fall asleep. But when I awoke, I was some other place, swaying to and fro."

"What happened?"

"It would seem that while I was asleep, I had been removed from the ruins and placed inside some bandits' wagon."

"Ahahaha, so dumb~"

Shiek couldn't hold back his uproarious laughter and was rofling. It really was a silly story.

It would have figured that when something finally happened at his ruins, he slept through the whole thing. But, as a shut-in myself, I could empathize with his boredom...

"Upon realizing the situation I was in, I escaped from the wagon. Of course, I raked those bandits that had taken me over the coals."

Looks like the bandits weren't a big deal then.

"Then why didn't you return to the ruins?"

Once he got out of the wagon, he should have immediately gone back to the ruins he was guarding.

“...I had never left those ruins. I couldn’t guess how long I’d been asleep after I was removed, nor did I know which road led back to them.”

So, in short, he was lost.

“Ah~, geez it’s so dumb~ M-my stomach can’t take it~!”

Now Shiek was practically roflcoptering on the ground, he was laughing so hard.

“So it wouldn’t have been easy to just go home?”

“Indubitably. I knew it was along a mountain road, but nothing beyond that. I began to wander aimlessly, then I saw flames in the distance and headed for that area.”

“And that turned out to be this village?”

“That is correct. The same bandits that took me were now attacking the village. I didn’t have any intention of saving the humans; because they took me however, and were now stealing again, I was grievously offended. So I punished them for a second time.”

So because of that, he became their Guardian Deity. The title seemed to have

been forced on him.

There probably wasn't even one villager back then who opposed treating the demon as a Guardian Deity.

"With my anger vented, I took up residence in the shrine. When I did, of their own volition, the villagers began to treat me as their Guardian Deity."

Then the shrine was already here. I wondered if there was some other Guardian Deity here before he came?

"I see, so you never had any intention of actually protecting the village."

If he had intended to be their Guardian Deity, he would have saved the villagers from the most recent bandit attack.

"Quite so, I didn't take out the bandits to save the village. The villagers came to that misunderstood conclusion themselves."

As I thought, he was just a normal monster. He wasn't of a mind to save humans.

"...Even so, there was one girl who so wholly believed me to be the Guardian Deity, that she came every day to clean, despite her weak body."

Must have been Tiel-chan. And he knew her body was weak? Well, probably because he saw her every day when she came to clean.

“I knew the bandits were coming, so when the girl came with her usual offerings, she was the only one I sheltered. No matter how many bandits came, I disposed of them all.”

Seems he was quite powerful.

A gargoyle is normally a rank D monster, but this guy might have had more powers than normal. He definitely had access to intermediate level Dark magic, so he wasn't someone to be trifled with.

“You couldn't be...trying to make a move on Tiel-chan...?”

Tiel-chan was probably around 14-15 years old. A several hundred year old demon with a still innocent, pure, if a bit eccentric, girl... was not something pleasant to think about. My own imagination got the best of me, making me sick, then the gargoyle gave his rebuttal.

“I would be pleased if you did not let your imagination run wild. I have done nothing to the girl. The only exception was casting 《Nightmare Sleep》 on her without inducing the nightmares; she merely slept. This is where my story ends. Now, I would like to hear the truth about you lot.”

True, it wasn't fair to get his life story without giving ours in return.

I spoke with Shiek while he recovered from his laughing fit, then explained everything to the gargoyle.

Chapter 11: I tried talking to the Guardian Deity about what to do

“Ha ha ha. Why, falling in love with a little human missy, you’re even more of an odd duck than I!”

I was a demon, and Shiek was a pixie. The explanation had been fine up to that point, but when he asked me why I was pretending to be human, this was how he responded when I answered.

“Captain, It can’t be helped~ When you first told me, I laughed myself silly~”

I knew it was unthinkable for a normal demon, but was it really that hilarious?

I couldn’t help that I fell in love.

“...Come on. It’s not that funny. You even went and got yourself lost.”

Mortified by their continuous laughter, I tried fighting back. It seemed to have worked better than I imagined.

“Lost...?”

There was an audible crack, like stone skin fracturing. My words had apparently done quite a bit of damage. Contrary to his appearance, he was surprisingly thin-skinned.

“Ye~ah. Lost, lost~”

I tried to ignore Shiek’s laughing. It was just a snappy comeback, but the gargoyle had taken quite the hit.

“No...To be lost is humiliating. Alas, I am unable to refute the truth of that statement...”

Now I had a depressed gargoyle on my hands. His response was much heavier than just a normal retort. Thinking about it, I only really knew weird people. Cecilia was the only one amongst them that seemed to have a shred of common sense, and she shined all the brighter in my mind for it.

“Putting all that lost stuff aside, you’re not planning on causing any mischief, right?”

“Naturally. I merely live in this shrine. I neither intend to trouble the village, nor save it.”

In others words, he meant neither harm, nor good.

Even so, he had still rushed to save Tiel-chan when she was in trouble. I’m sure it would be fine if I overlooked that small detail, but I still planned to discuss it more with Cecilia when we got back.

“So long as you mean no harm to the villagers, we’re golden. Shiek, let’s go back.”

“O~kay.”

We said our goodbyes to the gargoyle, then returned to Tiel-chan’s home.

Just as we were leaving, the gargoyle asked us to keep our lips sealed. “Do not tell anyone of my existence,” he demanded.

Don’t worry, I wouldn’t tell anyone other than Cecilia. It’d be a huge hassle if I told any of the villagers anyway.

When we got back to Tiel-chan’s house, she was sleeping in her bed, while Cecilia was sitting in a chair reading.

“Thank you for your hard work. ...Did anything happen?”

She had some questions after seeing the dirty state of our clothes. After making sure Tiel-chan was fully asleep, I told Cecilia everything that happened.

“The Guardian Deity was really a gargoyle? He hasn’t caused any trouble for the villagers, and there hasn’t been a request to exterminate him. However, that doesn’t rule out the possibility of something happening in the future...”

Cecilia wasn’t sure where she stood on the issue. I didn’t really mind overlooking his real identity but Cecilia couldn’t afford make her decision so lightly.

“He’s behaved himself for several hundred years already. I’m sure it’ll be

fine.”

“Well, when you put it that way... And there is the fact that he saved Tiel-chan; he does not seem to have any ill-intentions.”

“I’m bo~red~”

Right in the middle of a serious conversation, that little twerp...

“Go check on things in the village then. If you’re hungry, get something to eat with this.”

I gave Shiek some spending money, and kicked him out of the house. Now the nuisance was out of the way. It may have been mean, but he left for the village in high spirits, so everything should be fine.

“Is that really all right?”

“Even if he had stuck around, he wouldn’t really have an opinion on the matter. He just wants to play around right now.”

“That is true...”

She was easily convinced. It just went to prove how childish Shiek really was, didn’t it?

“...So, we were talking about what to do about the gargoyle, but why don’t we

hold off on that for now? We still need to heal the last of the villagers, and I think we should plan for what to do if the bandits attack again.”

Plus, if we did anything to the gargoyle, who knows what Tiel-chan would do? Tiel-chan was the biggest advocate around for the Guardian Deity.

“That’s true. Let’s focus our efforts on healing the villagers . Youki-san and Shiek-kun have been such a big help; The healing is nearly finished. Then we may be able to do something about the bandits...”

We then further discussed what to do about the bandits.

We came to the decision that tomorrow, once the villagers were healed, we would get some information from the gargoyle. This would also allow Cecilia to have a proper conversation with him. When we’d finished our discussion, we realized night had already fallen.

“Already that time, huh? We’d best get back to the mayor’s house.”

We didn’t want to worry anyone by getting back too late.

“I must agree. Let’s be on our way then.”

We left quietly so as not to wake Tiel-chan.

Walking through the woods on a moonlit night, just the two of us, it doesn’t get much more romantic than that.

I hadn't experienced the joy of walking with a woman on the street late at night in my last life.

I was incredibly nervous, but I tried not to let it show on my face.

I took a fleeting glance at Cecilia, but she didn't seem particularly nervous at all, just walking along normally.

"...Is something the matter?"

"Ah, no, nothing."

As I guessed, Cecilia didn't think anything about it. Seeing me all fidgety, Cecilia tilted her head.

In the end, even though there was such a good mood to work with, nothing happened on our trip back to the mayor's house.

I'm such a loser... I should have at least tried to hold her hand!

"Ooh! Cecilia-sama, you and your friend had us worried, coming back so late. Your other friend came back a while ago. He already ate dinner and retired to his room to sleep."

Upon reaching the house, a very lively mayor came out to greet us. He was very happy with the progress we'd made healing the villagers.

Shiek must have tired himself out from playing around. He ate his dinner and went to bed without even waiting for me or Cecilia? I suppose it was fine since he was just a kid.

“I’m sorry to have caused you any worry. After we treated Tiel-chan, we lost track of time while we were talking.”

“Is that what happened? Tiel lost her parents early on, then just 3 years ago, she also lost her last blood relative, her grandmother. I’m sure Tiel had fun talking together with you. Thank you very much.”

He bobbed his head in thanks. We spent more time with a pretty interesting Guardian Deity, but what the mayor didn’t know wouldn’t hurt him.

After that, we were treated to dinner. On the menu was vegetable stew and bread.

“I hope you’ll excuse this meager meal, it’s all we could prepare...”

“No, no. Considering the circumstances with the bandit attack and all, it’s normal not to have much in the way of food. I’m simply thankful you were able to give us any food at all. Time to dig in!”

I said my piece, then started chowing down on the grub. The mayor’s wife, our chef for the night, was a bit taken aback watching me eat so heartily.

“Youki-san is just that way. I shall also partake in the meal.”

Cecilia was my opposite, eating quietly and ladylike. Seeing us, the wife looked pleased.

After finishing our meal, we went over tomorrow's plans with the mayor before heading off to bed in the late of night.

"Cecilia-sama, please use the room you were in earlier, and have your friend stay in the room next door."

Following the mayor's instructions, we headed up to the second floor.

I told Cecilia goodnight, entered my room, and saw Shiek already fast asleep on the bed with that dumb-looking face of his. Apparently, we were sharing a room. It didn't really bother me since it wasn't any different than usual.

I needed to heal more villagers tomorrow, and had to get more information from the gargoyle. Being so tired, I immediately fell asleep.

"Today we're gonna continue healing the villagers, then get some more information from the gargoyle!"

"We are indeed."

"Boo~"

It was morning, and we were gathered in Cecilia's room to go over the plan for the day. Shiek was still half-asleep, but I dragged him along anyway.

“I’m sure the gargoyle has some solid intel, but I also want to hear what the villagers think. Shiek, you better get your rear in gear.”

“.....Fi~ine.”

He didn’t sound motivated at all, would he really do his job? I knew it would have been impossible, but should I have tried to bring Duke or Hapyneth along?

“When we take a break from healing the villagers, shall we go visit Tiel-chan once more? I’m still a bit worried about her health.”

“I think it’s a good idea, since she knows the most about the ‘Guardian Deity’.”

We’d be able to meet with the gargoyle and have our talk with him after meeting Tiel-chan. After eating the breakfast the mayor’s wife gave us, we gathered all the injured people back at the same place, and resumed treatment.

“Thank you, Cecilia-sama.”

Many of the villagers, especially the guys, wanted to be treated by Cecilia, creating a long line. I was tempted to get rid of the ones that had obvious ulterior motives with my magic.

“Take care~”

“Thanks, Shiek-kun.”

The lady receiving medicine was charmed by Shiek's adorable smile. There were a lot of young women going to see Shiek.

Me, on the other hand...

"Sorry to trouble you, Youki-san."

"Thanks, sonny."

"Them's good healin's."

I had a majority of the older folks. I didn't hate it or anything, but...I felt like I lost to Cecilia and Shiek.

"Hahaha...Don't push yourself too hard with the healing, m'kay?"

When I used my healing magic on them, the older folks relaxed and conversed with me. It was the kind of talk you'd hear at a hot spring resort. As I thought about that, I suddenly remembered about getting information on the gargoyle.

There was a high chance the elders still knew of stories from the past. This was my big chance, right?

"Excuse me, but do you happen to know anything about the village's Guardian Deity?"

"The village's Guardian Deity? ...Aah, I do know a little something. It's that

demonic statue deep in the woods. Tiel-chan is a devout worshipper of that statue after all. Everyone in the village knows about it.”

So apparently Tiel-chan was famous in the village. Everyone else in the village, other than her, knew it was a demonic looking statue. So that’s why the overly zealous Tiel-chan was infamous.

“Then is there a reason you call it the Guardian Deity of the village?”

“Hmmm....I’m not sure. It’s just been passed down as a legend that the demonic statue saved the village. But no one knows who made that stone sculpture, and there’s no record of it either.”

Of course there wasn’t. That statue itself was the one that saved the village after all. I wondered if there wasn’t any more pertinent information.

“But if that’s all there is to it, why is Tiel-chan so attached to it?”

“Ah, that girl wasn’t always like that in the past. She’d clean or take offerings from time to time, and that was all. But you see, one day that girl was attacked by a Red Fang.”

The Red Fang was a wolf-like monster. It got its name from the blood that would drip from its mouth when it caught prey. The name’s origin made it sound scary, but it was still only a piddly little rank E monster.

“Tiel-chan was 7 at the time, and she has that weak little body, ya know? But when all hope seemed lost, the Guardian Deity saved her...or so she said.”

That lying piece of...he had already been saving Tiel-chan for a while!

“Ehheh~. Then, no one else ever claimed being saved by the Guardian Deity?”

“Does a bear take a shit in the woods? It’s just an old wives’ tale. No one really believes in that thing. And everyone thinks the statue looks creepy, so we never go near it.”

“I see.”

After that, I asked many of the other elders, but it was all more of the same. The healing was done much faster compared to yesterday, and afterwards the three of us met up once again to go over the information we gathered.

“I’m sorry. I tried to ask most everyone about the Guardian Deity, however they ended up asking me a lot questions instead.”

“Me too~...”

They both felt guilty, but it couldn’t be helped. Their lines were full of the younger generation villagers. Even if they’d managed to ask, most of them wouldn’t have known anything about it. Rather, I wanted to beat the shit out of the guys hitting on Cecilia.

“...Youki-san? What strange thoughts are rattling around in that head of yours?”

“That I want to beat the hell out of all those guys fawning all over you.”

“Please don’t, it’ll take that much longer to heal everyone...so did Youki-san manage to gather any information?”

Cecilia firmly warned me. I’d just have to do it in a way so she wouldn’t find out...er, now wasn’t the time for that! I imparted to them all the intel I’d gathered from the older villagers.

“I see.”

“Heeh~”

Cecilia was listening intently, taking stock of all my info, but Shiek’s interest was waning. I had no more faith in this kid except where medicine was concerned.

“There are some major discrepancies compared to the info we got from the gargoyle yesterday. It also seemed like no one remembered that it had been the result of a previous bandit attack. He doesn’t sound very reliable.”

“Be that as it may, I would still like to speak with Gargoyle-san for myself.”

Maybe I was doubting him a little too much, but I felt justified considering the circumstances. We also still had our planned visit with him yet to come.

“Weren’t we going to visit Tiel-chan before that~?”

“Ah.”

“Ah!”

Totally forgot about that part. And I couldn't believe it was Shiek of all people who reminded us.

“Then Shiek, why don't you go visit Tiel-chan? It'd be bad if she bumped into the gargoyle while we were talking.”

“Ka~y.”

We left Tiel-chan to Shiek, then Cecilia and I went to see the gargoyle.

“You scoundrel, you have broken our agreement. I told you not to reveal my existence to anyone!”

After we got to the shrine, the minute I told Cecilia about him, the gargoyle stopped his statue-act and raised hell.

“So you are Gargoyle-san? My name is Cecilia. After the bandits attacked the village, leaving a great number of wounded behind, the Mayor requested my aid. So I came to this village to treat the injured villagers.”

“Hooh...So you were the little missy this demon brat was speaking of yesterday. Well then, did you have business with me?”

Brat? Well, I suppose in the eyes of a several hundred year old guy I'm still just a kid.

"I came to speak with you about the village. You really have no intention to attack it?"

"That's what I told that brat yesterday. I have no interest in attacking the village, nor do I wish to help it. I merely live here."

The same answer as yesterday. As I thought, it'd be fine to just leave this guy be.

Perhaps because it was just like I told her yesterday, she seemed to be satisfied. Ah, but there was one more thing we needed to ask about.

"Hey, I wanted to ask, when Tiel-chan was about 7-years old, did you save her from a Red Fang?"

"Perhaps...and if I did?"

"Are you...a 'Lolicon'?"

"L-lolli-kon?"

"Ah, you don't know the term 'Lolicon'?"

Not surprising that word doesn't exist in this world.

“I don’t.”

“I am also unfamiliar with the term.”

They asked casually, but they’d probably be surprised by the true meaning. Well, the gargoyle was probably just returning a favor, so there wasn’t really any profound meaning behind it.

“Nah, nevermind, it’s fine.”

“Come now. You have piqued my curiosity. Out with it, boy!”

“You leave me with no choice. So this is a word that comes from the world of my previous life...”

As I was telling them the meaning behind the word Lolicon, the gargoyle grew irate, just as I predicted, and started a fight with me. As we brawled he screamed things like ‘I have no such hobbies!’.

Cecilia let out a deep sigh as she sat in the shrine watching over our brawl. She didn’t even say not to overdo it...

“Remember this well, brat! I would absolutely never harbor feelings for young girls!”

The result went without saying. The underdog did not come out on top; the losing gargoyle was left howling in defeat. Having lost to Shiek before, there

was no way he could have beat me.

When Cecilia figured the fight was over, she stood up from the shrine, and dusted off her robe. I surmised from her expression that she was less than thrilled at the outcome.

“It appears to be over. ...Youki-san, please don’t provoke meaningless conflict. Truthfully, if there was any meaning to this fight, it was beyond my understanding.”

“It was just a slip of the tongue.”

“Even so, normally one would come to the conclusion that he was simply returning the favor for Tiel-chan cleaning every day. I do not believe he falls under your definition of ‘Lolicon’, does he Youki-san?”

I winced under Cecilia’s sound reasoning. At this rate, I would look like the bad guy. That was the last thing I wanted her to think about me. All righty, sorry gargoye, but I’m gonna make you into a real Lolicon.

“But, according to the information we got from the villagers, there was no corpse where Tiel-chan got attacked by the Red Fang, all that was left were black burn marks. This guy probably used the senior level Dark magic 《Dark Blaze》 to defeat the Red Fang.”

Dark blaze produced a flame that destroyed all it touched, leaving nothing behind; Truly a senior level magic spell. It was not a spell that a rank E monster like the Red Fang could handle . It was clearly overkill.

“Just to save Tiel-chan, this guy used a ridiculously powerful spell. Therefore, I could only think that he couldn’t forgive the Red Fang’s attack on his beloved Tiel-chan.”

Yep. A wonderful distortion of the truth, if I do say so myself. Upon grasping the meaning of my words, Cecilia’s eyes changed when she looked back at the gargoyle.

“Brat, quit with your hogwash. Hey, human girly, don’t give me that look!”

No matter what the gargoyle said, the look in Cecilia’s eyes did not change. Heh heh, Operation ‘Gargoyle is a Lolicon’ was a success. Sorry ’bout that gargoyle. I give thanks for your noble sacrifice in keeping Cecilia from hating me.

“Grr...If this conversation is over, I’m going back to sleep. ...I’ll say it once more, don’t reveal my existence to anyone else. Especially that little girl!”

He went back into the shrine and reverted to his statue form . He had run away with his tail between his legs. I tapped on the stone skin, but he didn’t react at all.

“Well, at the very least we can be sure this guy means no harm now, right Cecilia?”

“...Yes, more or less.”

I got the feeling she meant that in a more dangerous way than it seemed. I wondered if I really should clear up this grievous misunderstanding. Then again,

there was a good chance he really was a Lolicon...yeah, I had no idea what to do.

“Youki-san isn’t...that Lolicon thing right?”

“No worries, my only type is Cecilia.”

“Wha-?! You can’t just say something like that without any warning...”

Nothing happened between us yesterday, so I tried to work up a little more courage today. It had been a normal conversation up to that point, yet she suddenly turned her head away. My response seemed to have had the desired effect. I’m glad she didn’t think it was creepy.

Then, during our little chat, I felt a sudden murderous intent.

The murderous intent was coming from the shrine. The demonic statue’s face looked harsh. He was probably giving us a warning, ‘quit with your flirting in my presence’. Well, guess that meant it was time for us to move on.

“Okay, let’s go meet up with Shiek at Tiel-chan’s place.”

He was just dropping off more medicine, so he should have been done by now. Or rather, he could have gotten tired of waiting for us to get back and took off to play with the village kids. I took the still-bashful Cecilia’s hand, and headed to Tiel-chan’s home.

“...is why the Guardian Deity is so great. Shiek-kun, are you listening?”

“Ah ye~ah, I am~”

When we got into the house, Tiel-chan was speaking passionately about the gargoyle, and Shiek looked like he was about to go out of his mind. They were both relaxing on top of the bed.

“Captain~”

“Please wait, Shiek-kun! I have so much more to tell you about Guardian Deity-sama!”

“Save me~”

Shiek came running for me, but Tiel-chan had a tight hold on him. Shiek was on the verge of tears. I bet Tiel-chan talked to him about the gargoyle the entire time he was here. For Shiek, who loved nothing more than to frolic and play outside, this was hell.

“Youki-san, Cecilia-san, what perfect timing. I can also regale you with the fabulous tales of Guardian Deity-sama...”

Shit, if we stuck around to listen, who knew what time we’d be able to leave.

“Oh, sorry. We’re very busy today so we need to be going. Let’s go, Cecilia.”

“Wai-, Youki-san?! Tiel-chan just wanted to talk to...”

“Shiek, I’m counting on you to gather some good information. Make sure to come back by dinnertime.”

I felt bad for Shiek, but it was a necessary sacrifice. It would have been difficult to get out of that situation otherwise. Plus, he was always talking about being bored, so this was a perfect way for him to pass the time...was the excuse I made up just now.

“Captain!~”

“That’s a pity, but it cannot be helped. Now then Shiek-kun, to continue where I left off...”

I ignored Shiek pleading for help, and slammed the door shut. Once again, taking Cecilia by the hand, we returned to the mayor’s house. For some reason, this time I was able to take hold her hand naturally.

“...I really can’t help but feel sorry for Shiek-kun.”

“He got to play around a lot yesterday, so this much is fine.”

“I wonder if he’ll be all right, Shiek-kun...”

“Judging by his reaction, it wasn’t a very interesting conversation. ...Still, we got a lot of information from the gargoyle, so we shouldn’t have any problems.”

“.....”

Cecilia didn't say anything after that; Tiel-chan's zealotry was just that intense. I wondered if Shiek would actually make it back before dinner?

In the end, he did not..

Apparently Tiel-chan had slept so much the previous day that she wasn't tired at all today, and Shiek kept her company through all her rambling.

When Shiek finally did make it back, he ate the dinner that was left for him and quickly went to bed.

I spent the night reflecting on my actions after doing some pretty mean things to the gargoyle and Shiek today.

Like this, we continued healing the villagers and bothering the Gargoyle for the next few days.

Chapter 12: I tried protecting a village

After the villagers had almost been fully healed, and with the bandits nowhere to be found, I thought it might be time to head back to Minerva.

“Shiek already went to sleep, huh...”

His current schedule consisted of treating the villagers in the morning, and continuing to listen to Tiel-chan talk about the Guardian Deity in the evening. He was plenty exhausted.

My schedule, on the other hand, only consisted of healing the elderly villagers, then going to bother the gargoyle.

And now for the aftermath of Operation ‘Gargoyle is a Lolicon’. Cecilia had her doubts about the gargoyle really being a Lolicon, and gave me the third degree about it again.

As I’d thought, I couldn’t pull the wool over Cecilia’s discerning eyes. I admitted that I had fudged the truth and was thoroughly lectured, before being dragged back to the gargoyle’s shrine to apologize.

Even now I can easily recall his triumphant gloating. It had just started out as a joke...if this was how it would turn out, should I ever call anybody a Lolicon again? Not a chance, I didn’t want Cecilia getting mad at me again.

I had things to do tomorrow, so I went to bed early.

A few hours later, I was awakened by someone pounding on the door. Still half-asleep, I rubbed my eyes as the door suddenly opened. It was the mayor, and from his ragged breathing I wondered if he ran to get here.

“P-please help us! The bandits have begun a night attack. The young ones are fighting back, but most of them are still recovering...they won’t last long!”

“Got it. Is Cecilia already awake?”

“My wife just went to wake her.”

“All right then, Mayor, I want you to stay here in the house. I’m going now to annihilate those bandits.”

The mayor nodded and left the room.

“Shiek, wake up!”

“Wh~at Captain~, still sleepy~”

Shiek sat up in his bed and rubbed his eyes. I could understand his exhaustion, but this was an emergency situation.

“It’s a night attack by the bandits. The villagers requested our help immediately.”

“Okay~, got it~”

Shiek pulled out his dagger with one hand, then jumped out the window. I was going to use magic, so there was nothing to prepare. Just as I was about to leave the room, I ran into Cecilia. Robe donned and staff in hand, she was fully prepared for battle.

“Youki-san! Let’s hurry!”

“Don’t I know it.”

We left the mayor’s house in a hurry. Before us was a scene of villagers and bandits engaged in battle.

The clash of weapons echoed in the night under the light of the moon.

The attack was sudden, and the villagers weren’t back to 100% yet; The bandits had the upper hand. However, running around the battlefield, Shiek was upsetting the flow of battle.

“Now di-?!”

Shiek confused his opponents with quick and tricky maneuvers, and slashed the bandits one by one. In pain, the bandits were set upon by the villagers, and they took full advantage of the openings Shiek created.

“This fucking Braaaaaat!”

Of course there would be bandits that tried to take Shiek head-on. A 2 meter

(6'5"ft) giant bandit swung at Shiek with his large axe, however...

“Stu~pid”

Shiek leapt high, and brought his leg down with his signature axe kick right on top of the bandit's head.

The bandit collapsed backwards, and Shiek made a perfect landing right on top of him.

He then returned to running around the battlefield, injuring bandits as he went.

“Shiek-kun is strong. More so than I had imagined...”

“Using his light body to his advantage and throwing the enemy into confusion is his specialty. And of course he's strong. He wasn't my former minion just for show. All right, let's kick this pig!”

I couldn't let Shiek have all the fun, not when I could finally let loose for once. I left the rear support to Cecilia, then ran towards the bandits.

“《Lightning Flash》, 《Storm Blow》”

Then following Shiek's direction, I ran towards Tiel-chan's house with Cecilia not far behind. Maybe it was just my imagination, but I felt worried, even though I knew Shiek wouldn't lose to guys like that. We ran through the woods, until...

“...What the hell is this?”

We found fallen bandits, a gargoyle missing an arm and a wing, and a crying Tiel-chan. Then Shiek came into view, utterly thrashed and fighting some strange, mysterious man.



Chapter 13: I tried losing my shit

“You’re...not a villager. Hey now, we’ve got a celebrity here. Though the guy next to you looks like a common villager.”

“You are...?!”

Cecilia seemed surprised seeing the strange man, meaning that she might know something about him. I really wanted to ask about it, but now wasn’t the time. Shiek was in trouble.

“But before that, knock it off you little...brat!”

Shiek’s dagger was parried, and the man delivered a strong kick into his stomach, sending Shiek flying in our direction where he slammed into a tree.. He slid down to the ground, only to stand back up again.

When I looked at his face, the smile that should have been there was missing. Not because of the wounds, but because he was thoroughly pissed off. His mouth was closed, and his eyes were full of hatred as he glared at the man.

Again he faced the man, but I stopped him with a firm grip on his shoulder.

Even if Shiek attacked the man again, Shiek would still be the one defeated. Cecilia quickly used her healing magic on him as he was covered in wounds.

“Captain...this isn’t funny at all...”

Like that, he gripped his dagger, clearly intending to attack the man again. This time, I stopped him by pinning him to the ground.

“Calm down! Tell me exactly what happened.”

“That guy...took us by surprise, and attacked the gargoyle from behind while he was defending Tiel-chan from the bandits. ...When we asked why, that guy said it was because he was a gargoyle, and a gargoyle is a monster.”



“Come on now~, is it wrong to kill a monster? Even though I took the bastard down, that kid there attacked me out of nowhere. If you’re his guardian, teach him some goddamn manners.”

Just being a monster wasn’t a good reason to kill someone. Whether it was because Shiek felt ridiculed or mortified, he let out a soundless cry.

“If you’re just gonna cry, don’t bare your fangs at someone. Though I suppose you’re just at that age, but you chose the wrong opponent, little boy~”

The man continued to ridicule Shiek. Shiek and the gargoyle.

And so, this bastard who would kill a monster arbitrarily...

I would never be able to forgive him! I used 《Lightning Flash》 to strengthen my legs and narrowed the distance between us, then channeled 《Storm Blow》 into my arm and punched him. However, the man blocked the attack with his sword.

In an instant 《Storm Blow》, the spell I had on my arm, was nullified.

“Shit, what’s up with that sword?”

I was sure that sword was the reason my magic was canceled.

It wasn’t a particularly remarkable one handed-sword, but... Damn, I couldn’t even think, I was so angry.

“Youki-san, please get away! He’s not an opponent you should fight.”

While Cecilia healed Shiek, she calmed my rage.

“Cecilia, do you know this guy?”

“He’s the Hero from the Gallis Empire. His name is Mirror, the sword he wields is an artificial magic sword called 《Magic Eater》. It absorbs all magic, and for someone like Youki-san who only uses magic...”

“Wait wait wait, the Gallis Empire’s Hero?! There’s another Hero out there besides Hero-kun?”

I totally thought Hero-kun was the only one called Hero out there, but it looked like I was wrong. And that artificial magic sword had me intrigued.

“Yuuga was just the Clariness Kingdom’s chosen Hero; all the other countries had their own chosen Heroes as well. We were just the only ones that made it to the Demon Lord’s castle.”

Having locked myself away in the Demon Lord’s castle, I had no idea. Cecilia and her party were the only ones that came to my Mid-boss room. Duke and the rest never had any information for me either.

“Then, what’s up with this artificial magic sword?”

“The Gallis Empire created it using a great many powerful swords. There’s also rumored to be a spear and hammer as well, but...”

“Then what sword was Hero-kun using?”

“That was a legitimate holy sword; the Gallis Empire sought to make something like a replica.”

If they were really able to create something as dangerous as that, doesn't that mean they were looking to start a war? It seemed like the guy beat Shiek using only his sword skills, and absorbed any magic that came his way. How annoying.

"And just how long are you gonna chitchat? If you're not here to get in the way, then get out of the way. And shut the fuck up!"

After interrupting us, Mirror, the Hero of the Gallis Empire, walked up to the gargoyle. He was going to deliver the final blow.

"Wait! That gargoyle saved Tiel-chan, he wouldn't attack people..."

"What fucking bullshit are you spouting? It doesn't matter if a monster is good or evil. And me? I just want to kill 'em all."

...What did he just say? That's the line of a psychopathic killer.

"Youki-san, right from the very start that man had no intention of defeating the Demon Lord."

"What?! Then why'd he become a Hero? He was selected by the empire, I wouldn't think he'd have a choice."

"No. He did choose to become a Hero, but his reason for it——"

"It's the greatest excuse to kill as many monsters as I want. It was a pain in the ass having to get a quest for every single one of them from the guild, ya

know? That's why I wanted to become a Hero."

He kicked Tiel-chan aside with a hearty laugh, then sliced through the gargoyle's last remaining wing.

"Guardian Deity-sama——!!"

"Oh, hey now, if you get in my way...you know what'll happen, eh?"

He threateningly pointed his sword at Tiel-chan as she rushed over to save the wingless gargoyle.

"Please wait! If you, the Hero of the Gallis Empire, took the life of one of the Clariness Kingdom's citizens, do you have any idea what would happen...?"

"Don't know, don't care. If you wanna start a war, be my guest, it ain't got nothin' to do with me. And what's this? Are you telling me the noble Lady of the Aquarain family wants to be my next victim?"

Pointing his sword at Cecilia now, he was grinning and laughing to himself,

Although his previous conduct and behavior had already reached unforgivable levels... now... NOW he crossed the line.

Something snapped inside me.

Not wanting to go down without a fight, Cecilia raised her staff and began

channelling magic but I interrupted her by grabbing her shoulder and pulling her behind me.

“Youki-san?!”

Cecilia noticed the sudden change in me and was disquieted. But now that it had come to this, there was no stopping me.

“Huh? You’re gonna take me on? Sorry, but I think I’d have more fun with that little Aquarain bitch over there.”

He thought he understood the extent of my power from our little exchange earlier. Don’t look down on a cheat, buddy. No way in hell that was my real strength. Some little scrub who was good with a blade and relied on a magic-absorbing sword...get set to get rekt!

“Mwahahaha, I’ll send you to a special kind of hell. Prepare yourself!!”

Making Shiek and Tiel-chan cry, messing up the gargoyle, and to top it all off, pointing a blade at my beloved Cecilia, he was going to regret all of it.

“What on earth do you think you can do? Bring it on, Villager boy—”

Now he was even mocking me, but not for long.

“Heh, here we go! 《Fireball》《Thunderbolt》《Aqua Vulcan》《Wind Blade》《Rock Needle》!”

I fired off elementary level magic for Fire, Lightning, Water, Wind, and Earth.

“Surprisingly powerful, but futile. Don’t you know that won’t work?”

He wore a carefree smile while his sword absorbed all of the spells. But I wasn’t done just yet. That was just a greeting.

“《Spark Storm》《Aqua Stream》《Gale Shoot》!”

I combined intermediate level Lightning, Water, and Wind spells together.

The Wind magic added momentum, and the raging stream wrapped in Lightning tore through the ground to Mirror.

“I told you, that won’t do jack shit!”

Once again, the blade cut through the magic and absorbed it. Mirror had a huge grin aimed at me. I’m sure he thought I was an idiot.

“I’m getting bored here, hurry up and take a hike!”

He ran to me and slashed with his sword. Using 《Lightning Flash》 I managed to avoid Mirror’s swing. His skill with the sword was impressive, but it mattered little to me.

“Ya know, you’re good at dodging and all, but how about pulling out a goddamn weapon? You know magic doesn’t work against me. At least with a

weapon you'd have a chance!"

"Bwahahaha, unfortunately for you I won't be using any weapons. All those who oppose me shall be consigned to oblivion by my magic."

There was a simple reason as to why I didn't want to use weapons: I had reincarnated in a fantasy world, and I always thought that people who used magic to defeat their enemies were really cool.

I may have had a cheat, but I never really wanted to wield a proper weapon in the first place. Being a demon, I did have sharp claws to use as a natural weapon, but I didn't really feel like using them right now.

"You're some kind of super moron, you know that? You could fight against me for the rest of your life and never win! 《Blade Wave》!"

He was continuously frustrated with me dodging all of his attacks, and finally released a wide-ranged shockwave with his sword.

I could have easily dodged the attack, but Cecilia and everyone else would have received the brunt of the shockwave, so I took it head on.

"Youki-san!"

Cecilia's voice resounded through the air. Aw shit, having the girl you're in love with worry about you is great, it fanned the flames of my passion!

It would have been nice to drag this moment out a little longer, but playtime

was over. I dispersed the shockwave with my magic, then put some distance between Mirror and myself.

“See if you can absorb this! 《Burn Waltz》《Sea Paradise》《Hyper Storm》《Roaring Thunder》《Heaven Judgement》《Falling Meteor》!”

I cast Fire, Water, Wind, Lightning, Light, and Earth type Superlative level magic. Likely the only magic user capable of such a feat was me.

Even Mirror was a bit surprised, but still managed to absorb the magic with a slash of his blade.

“But wait, there’s more! 《Burn Waltz》《Sea Paradise》《Hyper Storm》《Roaring Thunder》《Heaven Judgement》《Falling Meteor》!”

Once again I cast Fire, Water, Wind, Lightning, Light, and Earth type Superlative level magic.

It was only an artificial magic sword after all, there had to be a limit to how much magic the blade could absorb. This realization slowly spread over Mirror’s face as well.

I repeated the volley of Superlative level magic 4 times, and finally his sword started to crack. Then, on the fifth volley, the cracks spread and finally the whole thing broke apart.

“Fuck! Just how much magic do you have?!”

His precious sword was broken by a guy he severely underestimated, thus Mirror completely lost his composure. However, I wasn't so nice as to wait for my opponent to recover.

"You're full of openings!"

Without even the time to panic, I gifted him a straight punch right into his face. He was blown backwards, and awkwardly rolled across the ground.

Unable to contain my anger, I cast 《Falling Meteor》 and 《Burn Waltz》 in rapid succession.

When the smoke cleared, Mirror collapsed on the ground, utterly thrashed.

"Making me angry was your biggest mistake."

And of course, at the end, I gave my signature pose.

When I looked back, Cecilia was holding her head as if she was face palming. Tiel-chan was attending to the gargoyle and didn't see me at all.

And here I thought I'd be showered with praise at my victory. Well, it's not like I wanted any recognition for my success, so I didn't worry about it much. I was more concerned with how Shiek was doing and jogged over to Cecilia.

"Well done, Youki-san. ...But was that last part really necessary?"

‘That last part’ was probably the signature pose.

“Er, well, it was like a switch flipped inside me, and I kinda got all jazzed up. So after battling for a bit, I just naturally fell into my signature pose when the fight ended...”

Switch inside of me...I dub thee Chuuni-switch.

“Right...”

Cecilia didn’t look convinced. She didn’t understand the concept of Chuunibyou at all.

“Anyway, how’s Shiek doing?”

“He has a number of cuts, but no serious wounds, so 2-3 days of treatment and he should be as good as new.”

“I see, thank goodness. Next, to heal the gargoyle——”

At that moment, sensing a presence I quickly turned around. Mirror, who should have been defeated, threw a spear at the gargoyle. He used the spear to cast 《Holy Laser》. The moment the attack hit, the magic would explode.

“Shit, now’s it’s an artificial magic spear?!”

I had no choice but to stop it. I cast 《Lightning Flash》, and jumped over to the

gargoyle.

Would I make it in time?

However, as I ran, an unbelievable scene unfolded before my eyes. Standing in front of the gargoyle was Tiel-chan.

At this rate, the spear would pierce Tiel-chan instead. Please let me make it in time! I prayed as I drew near the spear and reached out to catch it.

However, reality is cruel, and the spear went through Tiel-chan, piercing her abdomen.

“Girl, why did you protect me?!”

“Guardian, Deity-sama...You have, protected me, so many, times. That’s why, this time...”

“Nrg, boy!”

“I got it. Cecilia! Hurry!”

I grabbed the spear and pulled it free. Blood poured out from her abdomen when I did. As I knew she’d collapse to the ground, I quickly went in to support her body. It was a dangerous situation, and her body was already weak. We had to hurry and use healing magic to close the wound.

“Youki-san, behind you!”

Cecilia ran towards me, yelling. When I looked at Mirror, he was firing off another shot.

“Don’t fuck with me!”

The second shot was aimed again at the gargoyle, but this time I was able to easily catch it and nullify it. Finally noticing me, he refrained from firing a third shot.

“Haah... So a different nuisance got in my way this time. Is it really impossible now that Villager boy is here?”

Mirror, the “Hero” of the Gallis Empire, should have been a mess from our fight just now, but it looked like he was already healed.

Cecilia finally made it over, so I entrusted her with continuing Tiel-chan’s healing, then headed over to Mirror. Unlike before, I didn’t snap. On the contrary, I was strangely calm. I approached Mirror with no expression showing on my face.

“Honestly, I was here to investigate the Clariness Kingdom’s Hero. I just so happened to pass by this village.”

There’s a limit to how much he could mess around; Tiel-chan and the gargoyle were in a terrible state because he ‘just so happened to pass by’. As I thought, he was unforgivable.

“I still can’t believe it; my sword 《Magic Eater》 breaking was outside my expectations. And I took way more damage than I should have. Thanks to the 《Wand of Magical Storage》, I was able to heal up just fine, but it has limited uses. Still, you gave me quite a run for my money, so it’s all good. I don’t even care about gathering information on the Hero anymore. I’ve gotten my hands on some even more amazing intel.”

“You think you can escape?”

I had a feeling I was going to have to beat this guy senseless. I couldn’t let him escape.

“You really are an idiot, Villager boy. Did you really think I wouldn’t have an escape plan?”

Mirror then took out a bow he had hidden behind his back and loosed an arrow. It flew in an arc, and as it got higher, it kept multiplying until it was about to rain arrows upon Cecilia and the others.

“If you don’t protect your friends, they’ll be hit by the arrows~”

“Dammit!”

I rushed to Cecilia’s side, and used the senior level magic 《Hurricane》 to blow the arrows away.

When I looked back for Mirror, there was a blinding flash.

I opened my eyes to find he was gone. He got away.

He slayed bandits, hurt Shiek, and severed the gargoyle's arm and both wings. There was also Tiel-chan's weak body to worry about; the whole situation was pretty bad. He better not think this was over yet...

He couldn't have gotten far yet. If I hunted him down, I should find him. I wouldn't rest until he was crushed.

Chapter 14: I tried being a demon again

“Cecilia, this situation is entirely my fault.”

I had assumed Mirror was down for the count and completely let down my guard.

“Youki-san, you are not the only one at fault. I wasn’t able to do anything either.”

Cecilia replied apologetically while healing Tiel-chan’s injuries.

No, I was the stupid one here. Lately, I’d been having so much fun that I’d become complacent. My body had the cheat power of infinite magic. But in the end... that’s all it was.

Like this, could I protect the girl I liked? Did I really think everything would always turn out all right? This world was not as kind as I had once thought. Could I still change this situation if I needed to? No, not if, I had to.

I was determined to meet that end.

“Cecilia, the villagers aren’t likely to come around here, right?”

“I don’t think they would.”

“Tiel-chan passed out from the pain, and the gargoyle seems like he’ll be fine.

And anyone else in the area...?”

I looked around to make sure no one else was there. I didn’t sense any other presence, so it should be fine.

“Youki-san, what are you planning?”

“Isn’t it obvious? I’m gonna beat the shit out of Mirror. Also, I’m gonna make sure he doesn’t underestimate monsters ever again; I’ll give him a bit of a trauma. Don’t worry, I won’t kill him.”

Although I’d beat him within an inch of his life.

I’d always stopped them before, but now I let my horn and wings regrow. I used magic to boost my physical strength, giving myself more muscle mass. My shirt got shredded, but that worked in my favor. I couldn’t change my face, but I could wrap my scarf around the lower half of it to hide it.

The finishing touch was a wig Cecilia had given me to help disguise myself before. I had brought it along just in case, and was thankful I did.

My previous appearance didn’t hold a candle to this one, I was like a completely different person, a monster standing over 2 meters (6’5”) tall.

“Y-Youki-san...?!”

Cecilia was surprised by my new form. Maybe she’d be captivated once I returned.

“Okay, I’m off. Take care of Tiel-chan.”

I imparted her with those words in a lower voice than usual, then flapped my wings and headed for the woods to search for Mirror. My usual Chuuni didn’t even rear its ugly head, I was perfectly calm as I carefully searched the woods for him.



I heightened my perception of smell and sound for a few minutes.

Spotting Mirror from the air, I swooped down in front of him.

“Tch! Why the hell is a demon in a place like this?!”

All right, he didn't recognize me. He viewed me as an enemy and drew his sword. Really, another artificial magic sword?

"Hey, I already had my fun for the day and would like to get home. So hurry up and meet your maker!"

Mirror slashed at me, but using my wings I got behind him, grabbed his head, and slammed him into the ground.

"Gubwaa?!"

He made a weird sound. I flapped my wings to put a little distance between us. I could have taken that chance to beat the hell out of him as he lay defenceless on the ground, but that wasn't how I wanted to do this. Mirror slowly rose and scowled at me.

"Goddammit, 'the fuck is wrong with you?!"

"Scum, you have the gall to take the arm and wings of my subordinate, the gargoyle? That gargoyle is my loyal servant. For the wounds you have wrought upon my servant, you deserve certain death."

I came up with a good lie on the spot to beat the ever living shit out of Mirror. Mirror clicked his tongue and threw a baton into the air. A torrent of light erupted from the baton, lighting up the area. So, that baton was the source of the light he had used to escape earlier. Too bad, I wasn't stupid enough to fall for the same trick twice.

“《Bright Eater》”

The spell was a dark type magic that devoured light. Light-hating monsters used the spell on their dwelling to clear away said light, but it could also be used in cases like this.

The flash quickly disappeared, revealing Mirror stupidly trying to escape. With his back wide open I quickly closed in on him while lengthening and strengthening my claws, then carved a large X into his back.

“Gaaah?! Why did the 《Flash Baton》’s light...”

He looked like he was about to fall, but somehow managed to maintain his balance. Even if he’d fallen, his punishment still wasn’t over.

“It’s gonna be a bitch, but I gotta fight.”

For whatever reason he was grinning ear to ear. First he was running, now he thinks he can win? If so, he’s quite the optimistic guy. This time I’m a demon at full power. Although since he doesn’t know it’s me, it doesn’t really matter all that much.

“Just diiee!”

Mirror drew his sword and came at me. Again, brazenly coming in from the front like an idiot; he really needed a combat lesson. Flying around behind him, I grasped his sword arm and mercilessly broke it.

“Geh...?!”

Mirror managed to suppress his voice without screaming, dropped his sword, then put some distance between us. I was rather impressed that he didn't scream.

“Shit fuck...why is there still such a strong demon around after the Demon Lord was already killed?”

He glared at me while grabbing his broken arm. If he still had enough energy to glare, he was still fine. I had no intention of giving him any time to rest. I drew in close and delivered a powerful kick to his abdomen, sending him flying like a soccer ball. He only stopped when he collided with a tree.

“I am yet to be sated. Scum, you would be wise to prepare yourself.”

I needed to get back to Cecilia soon, so it was time to end it. I was no longer the human Youki, but the demon Youki, and I could be as cruel as I desired. Time to beat him within an inch of his life.

Mirror took a dagger into his unbroken hand, and came at me again. He was faster than before, and I deduced the dagger was the source of his enhanced speed. Still, it was useless against me.

Punching him with all my strength, he slammed into the ground hard enough to cause a small tremor. He stopped moving, and I used that time to fly into the air, then, using the momentum of the fall, I drove my fist into his gut. I could hear the sound of bones breaking. He coughed up blood, so a number of organs must have been injured.

As Mirror collapsed, I proceeded to break both his legs, along with every single weapon I found on his person.

I then grabbed Mirror by the scruff of his neck, and used my wings to take off into the sky. After a bit, I reached our destination.

“Gahah... Where...are you taking, me...?!”

I thought he’d resist, but it took all he had just to speak. He had injuries to one arm and both legs, broken bones, and damaged organs. I had also destroyed all his remaining weapons. He was in no condition to fight.

“.....”

Our destination was a river.

Previously, Cecilia told me it’d be a good idea to learn more about the geography of the land, so I had studied a bit. If I remembered right, this river lied near the border of the Gallis Empire.

“Hey, it couldn’t be, you...”

“You are not even worthy to die by my hand, cur.”

“Ah, ahahahaha, don’t fuck with me! I’ll never forgive you for this! This humiliation...”

I let go of the grip I had on his neck. With a crazy smile on his face, Mirror dropped into the river.

If he was lucky, he'd wind up back in his country. I promised Cecilia I wouldn't kill him after all. I made sure he fell into the river, then hurried back.

"Phew..."

After I landed, I reverted my muscles back to normal. My jacket and pants were shredded, but it couldn't be helped. ...I wondered what the villagers would think happened when I returned? I was worried they might think me a pervert.

"...Oh whups, almost forgot."

I broke off my horn and removed my wings. It hurt like a bitch, but I endured it.

Finally, I removed the wig and put it in the tattered pocket of my jacket. I was back to being the human Youki.

"I'd best be getting back to Cecilia now."

After completely crushing Mirror, I ran back to my beloved Cecilia.

Chapter 15: I tried making a request

It's been a few days since I beat the living daylights out of Mirror and tossed him into the river.

After that, I made my way back to Cecilia, who had been rather worried about me. In particular, she didn't know what to think when I had taken on my demon form. I had to take that form to instill the fear of demons into Mirror, but... Cecilia wanted me to continue living my life in my more human form.

I had my own reasons, but I became a demon in body only. If at all possible, I never wanted to take my demon form again. Right now, I just wanted to live my life as the human Youki.

I wondered if it was from the shock of losing the fight, but ever since then, Shiek had been down in the dumps. Cecilia and I did our best to cheer him up, but it wasn't very effective. At this rate, I'd have to rely on Duke and Hapyneth to do something about it when we returned home. And if even they couldn't manage, my last resort would be Celia-san. She was very fond of Shiek, so I hoped she'd be able to do something for him.

Through our healing magic, Cecilia and I somehow saved Tiel-chan from almost certain death.

She was in really bad shape, but the Gargoyle never let go of her hand, and that may just have been what kept her hanging in there. That same gargoyle had lost both his wings and an entire arm.

That wasn't something healing magic could fix. He, himself, said not to bother

worrying about it, but it was sure to be all kinds of inconvenient.

Cecilia contacted the knights, led by Raven, to take care of incarcerating the captured bandits.

We met a lot of people and dealt with a bunch of incidents, but today we were finally leaving Dagaz Village.

At the moment, we were packing up our things at the Mayor's house. We'd lived here for over a week, and I felt a little sad to leave.

"Shiek, did you get your things all packed up?"

Shiek was moving slowly, packing his clothes and medicine-making supplies into his rucksack. His only response to me was a small tilt of his head.

There was nothing we could do if Shiek hadn't gotten over the shock by now, so Cecilia and I gave up on trying to help. He was still young, and this was the first time he had ever hit a such a high wall.

"When you're done packing you can go play outside. You made friends with some of the local kids, right? This might be your last chance to play with them, you should go."

"...Sure."

He slung the packed rucksack onto his back and jumped out the window.

...Why couldn't he just go out the front door?

"...It'd be nice if he could cheer up a little bit at least."

I hoped the village kids could get Shiek in a better mood while I finished packing my own belongings and cleaning up the room. Just as I got to a point where I could take a break, there was a knock on my door.

"Youki-san, is it all right for me to come in?"

I heard Cecilia's voice from the other side of the door.

"Yeah, it's fine."

After I answered, she opened the door. As she entered the room she glanced around.

"I see you're all done packing. And cleaning the room... hm? Where is Shiek-kun?"

"It's our last day here, so he jumped out the window to go play with the village kids."

"...Is that so? We still have plenty of time before we depart, so I don't see any problems."

Cecilia also didn't mind Shiek's absence.

“So, do you need something?”

“Yes, as I said, we still have some time before we depart, so would you come with me to see Tiel-chan and Gargoyle-san? “

I guess we should give them a proper farewell before we leave.

Tiel-chan had been on the verge of death due to my pride and carelessness. And even though the gargoyle had lost a few of his limbs, he was still a pretty cool guy, and I wanted to see him again before we left.

“Sounds like a plan. And Shiek...he'll be fine. Let's go.”

Cecilia and I headed off to Tiel-chan's home, just the two of us. We had gotten used to the walk through the woods, but when we arrived at Tiel-chan's house we heard a ruckus coming from within.

“Youki-san, someone's in Tiel-chan's home!”

“Did one of the bandits get away?!”

Cecilia took up her staff, and with my magic always being ready, we assumed our battle positions. Then, when we opened the door to the ruckus...

“Guardian Deity-sama! To think you would come visit someone as unworthy as me! I apologize for the mess of books about the room. Please wait just a moment, I'll get them all cleaned up right away!”

“Eeeh, it’s fine, just go back to bed, girl. You’re still not fully recovered! If you don’t, it defeats the whole purpose of me coming to tend to you.”

“There is simply no way I could go back to sleep. I must put away all my books, clean the room, make the tea, and, and...”

“You don’t have to do anything, just go to bed!!”

Clad in only her nightgown, Tiel-chan was struggling as the Gargoyle forced her into bed.

Cecilia was completely blindsided in shock; I, however, had gotten used to such crazy situations a long time ago.

After she protected him with her own body, I guessed that the gargoyle had become worried and came to see how Tiel-chan was doing. It was his intention to nurse her back to health, but when the venerable Guardian Deity-sama came to see her, Tiel-chan completely freaked out.

“Hey, you lot there. Quit gawking and give me a hand! Throwing a fit like this can’t be good for her health.”

“Guardian Deity-sama, Guardian Deity-sama. May I may be so bold as to request that you call me by my name, Tiel?”

“Eer, sure. Then...Tiel, you’re not fully recovered, so stay in bed like a good...”

“Kyaa! Guardian Deity-sama called me Tiel! He really called me by name. Ah, I can die happy now...”

Her face became red as she went off into her own little world. She held her head in both hands as she swayed back and forth in rapture. It looked totally wrong.

She was probably replaying the gargoyle saying her name on infinite repeat in her head.

“You won’t die. Instead, knock it off and calm down!”

As the gargoyle desperately tried to make Tiel-chan lie down, I simply watched on until Cecilia recovered from her shock.

“...Please forgive me, I lost sight of myself there for a little while. And after you went out of your way to come visit me...”

After complying to the gargoyle’s demands, Tiel-chan finally calmed down. We didn’t want her to flip out again, so the gargoyle waited outside the home.

“N-no really, it’s quite all right. Isn’t it, Youki-san?”

“Ah, yeah, sure.”

Cecilia and I both tried to keep our real expressions to ourselves, but inside we wore a forced smile.

But for her to go that crazy... Just how much did she love that gargoyle? I was worried she might turn into a yandere.

“But this is perfect. I was just about to go see the two of you myself.”

“Did you need something from us?”

“The truth is... I would like for you to take me and Guardian Deity-sama with you to Minerva.”

She bowed her head very low to us. When she did, the door burst open with a gusto. Hearing us from outside, the gargoyle came in.

“Tiel, what are you talking about...”

“I beg of you, Cecilia-san, Youki-san! Guardian Deity-sama lost both of his wings and his arm protecting me. His body can’t even be repaired with magic. But if we go to Minerva, we might find a way to fix him.”

She pleaded with us and again lowered her head.

It’s true that compared to this little mountain village, someone in a place like the largely populated Minerva might be able to scrape up some information on a way to heal him, but...

“What are we gonna do? Cecilia?”

“I’m sorry, but that’s impossible. Tiel-chan is sick, and I don’t know what we would do about Gargoyle-san. On the off chance someone from the village were to discover he was missing from the shrine, it could turn into a huge problem...”

That’s what I figured. Still, I didn’t want Tiel-chan’s efforts to be in vain. If I were to pitch in and help...

“Cecilia, I think I might have an idea...”

“...Although I’m very concerned, I suppose I should at least hear you out. Do explain, please.”

“Well, you see...”

I went over my plan, and at first Cecilia was reluctant, but I managed to convince her through sheer enthusiasm.

“Awesome, we have Cecilia’s seal of approval. Isn’t that great?”

“Now wait just a minute, brat! I have yet to decide if I even want to...”

“That’s fantastic! Isn’t it, Guardian Deity-sama?”

Before the gargoyle could finish his retort, Tiel-chan threw her arms around him. After that, the gargoyle couldn’t say anything. Dammit...I want Cecilia to

hug me like that!

But I suppressed my earthly desires, and instead explained my great plan to the two of them.

They both accepted the plan, and we completed the preparations. Then, it came time to bid farewell to the villagers.

“On behalf of the village, I would like to express our gratitude. We thank you for saving our village from its crisis on this occasion.”

The mayor bowed his head to us. I could get used to being thanked like this.

“Also, we leave Tiel in your very capable hands.”

We had informed them we were taking Tiel-chan with us to Minerva in order continue treating her weak condition there. It was at least half true.

She had mostly recovered, but Cecilia was going to ask Celia-san to let Tiel-chan work and live in the Aquarain mansion. While she worked there, Shiek would continue to provide her with medicine.

On the other hand, the gargoyle...

“...? Youki-dono, what is that statue?”

Loaded on top of the carriage was, of course, the gargoyle. However, I coated

his entire body using my Earth magic, and gave him the appearance of large Buddha statue.

“Ah, sorry. I found a beautiful rock near the village, and I was suddenly taken by my urge to delve into my statue sculpting hobby. It turned into quite the masterpiece, so I wanted to take it back with me.”

“I-I see. That’s quite an...interesting hobby you have...”

Even I think having a statue sculpting hobby is weird.

I know it’s incredibly rude to people that actually do have a hobby carving statues, but I had to force the words out of my mouth. Besides that, I made a new demonic statue to put in the shrine. According to Tiel-chan, hardly any villagers visit the shrine anyway, so even if the statue looked a little different, no one would notice.

After we finished loading up the gargoyle, everyone hopped into the carriage.

“Goodbye, everyone. May we meet again someday.”

After saying our fond farewells, the carriage headed out for Minerva.

After we got back to Minerva, Tiel-chan was successfully hired as a maid, however, my request to display my “masterpiece” the gargoyle at the mansion was denied.

Tiel-chan desperately didn’t want to be separated from the gargoyle and

asked numerous times, but each time she was turned down.

Maybe because I was the one that “made” it, Celia-san replied,

“Youki-kun. If you would like to place a statue in our home, I recommend polishing your ‘style’ a bit more.”

...she told me with a completely straight face.

I didn’t have the same aesthetic sense as the people in this world. Just one of the many difficulties I faced being from another world.

In the end, the gargoyle came to live with me in my rented room.

Chapter 16: I tried changing the appearance

“Captain, who and where is the guy that made Shiek cry? Please tell me, or I won’t be able to live with myself if I don’t beat him bloody!”

“...Bloodbath.”

It was the day after we returned to Minerva. I was tired from the work in Dagaz Village, and was sleeping on my bed at the inn when Duke and Hapyneth suddenly burst in through the door to visit.

With the door making a sudden sound, I jumped to my feet. Word traveled to them way too fast.

“Hey, chill out guys! ...Where did you even hear about that?”

“We already knew Shiek had gone out on a job, so Hapyneth and I were going to welcome him home with a party for a job well done. But yesterday when I called out to him, his expression was dark, and I heard the whole story from him directly.”

Come to think of it, Shiek had disappeared at some point after we got home yesterday.

It happened when I was negotiating with the old man running the inn about putting the gargoyle, disguised as a Buddha Statue, into my room.

Moreover, a party for a job well done? Why those little...why was I the only one not invited...?

Didn't I always do my best on my jobs? Granted, even if they invited me I wouldn't have been able to go, since I was negotiating late into the night with the old man at the inn, but still!

"Rest assured, you guys, I took care of the asshole that made Shiek cry. Broke both his legs and an arm, and tossed him into the river."

After I told them about my revenge on Mirror, both Duke and Hapyneth shook their heads and had an expressions of 'good grief' on their faces. Was it something I said?

"Tsk tsK tsK, you were too soft on him, Captain. If it were me, I would have ground all his bones into dust, then put a weight on him and dropped him into the ocean."

"...Laceration."

Isn't that a little harsh, you guys?

...Well, when you think about what Mirror did, that might have been the way to go about it.

Still, right now he was floating down the middle of a river somewhere. In the first place, he might not even still be alive, so it was fine.

“Anyway, I took him down, so everything’s all right. ...The real question here is, why aren’t you two at work?”

Duke was always suited up in his armor so it was harder to tell with him, but Hapyneth was still in her maid uniform. And it was still too early for it to be their lunch break, so these two were probably...

“No problems here. I’ll be getting back soon enough.”

“...Unconcerned.”

“No problem my ass! You both blew off work to come here, didn’t you?! Go back, right now!”

If Raven or Sophia-san caught wind of this it would be unacceptable. And what am I gonna do if I get dragged into it?

“But Captain, y’know Shiek right now, no matter what we say, he’s not feeling any better! Aren’t you worried?!”

“...Agreement.”

“Yeah...”

I see, so that’s what this is all about. I folded my arms as I went into thought. If even these two couldn’t cheer him up, I had no choice but to ask Celia-san. Even if I didn’t ask, she would probably help Shiek, that’s just how she was.

“Let’s leave this matter to Celia-san. Shiek is already over there anyway.”

“Is that so? We weren’t able to help, but maybe if it’s Celia-san, she’ll be able to comfort him.”

“...Hopeful.”

They both agreed with me. Maybe now they’d get back to work.

“Oh right, Captain? I’ve been meaning to ask since I got here, but...what is that?”

Duke pointed at the gargoyle’s big Buddha statue form. I wondered if I should tell them the whole story behind it. And just as I was mulling it over...

“I gotta say, it’s butt-ugly. What garbage pile did you pick it up from? It doesn’t match the room, and frankly, it’s in the way. You should toss it back in the garbage heap.”

“...Agreed.”

I couldn’t get a word in edgewise as they continued their trash talking. Out of the corner of my eye I could see the Buddha-guised gargoyle shaking slightly. He was obviously listening in.

“You really need to toss this thing. I can’t even imagine what was going through someone’s head when they were making this.”

“...Garbage.”

“Silence you fools! Running your mouths off like that... I’ll have you know I have not assumed this form of my own volition!!”

Even the gargoyle had a limit for the verbal abuse he could take, and understandably blew his top when it was surpassed.

Maybe it was because the Buddha statue suddenly began to speak, but they were both instantly surprised, then quickly recovered. Duke drew his sword from his scabbard, and Hapyneth began to cast a spell.

Sensing the danger emanating from their quick reaction, the gargoyle busted out of the Buddha’s body, revealing his true form.

The situation quickly turned critical, but I’d be in trouble if they broke out into a fight here, so I stepped in to stop them.

“Chill out! Don’t go wild in the room; who do you think has to pay for repairs if anything gets damaged?! All of you sit! Then explanations.”

I reprimanded all three of them, then explained the gargoyle’s circumstances to Hapyneth and Duke.

“Heeeeh, is that right? My bad, drawing my sword on you. I’m called the Duke of Dullahan, nice to meet you. And this is Hapyneth, a Harpy. She’s a bit short

on words, but she's a good girl. I hope you'll both get along."

"...Well met."

"Hrmmm...So you're the brat's friends...I am but a mere gargoyle. I have no name. A pleasure to meet you."

"It's gonna make it hard to address you with no name. I wonder if we could give you some kind of nickname..."

"...Guy."

"Ooo, that's sounds cool, doesn't it? Guy...it gives off a strong and manly feeling."

"Hmph...Call me what you will."

"...Established."

Thank goodness...no one went wild in the room. And it looks like they'll all get along well. In this short time their friendship even progressed to the stage of using nicknames. Even I thought calling him just "gargoyle" was a mouthful. I wondered if it'd be okay for me to call him "Guy" too.

"But still, to think your disguise was Captain's fault...I wouldn't have been able to stand looking like that."

“...Lame.”

“I, myself, had actually thought the same, but in order to blend in with the humans, I had little choice...”

And just as they were getting along happily, they then all started to bash my Big Buddha masterpiece. So I joined in and ‘happily’ gave them a piece of my mind.

“...You’d better knock that shit off now, you little bastards.”

In the end, I snapped, and the room turned into a warzone. After causing a ruckus for a while, there was a knock at the door. Hapyneth and Duke were one thing, but if anyone saw the gargoyle we’d be in deep shit, so I quickly coated him with my earth magic.

As the Big Buddha proved so unpopular, I tried a different statue this time. And just as I finished the door opened.

“It appears I was correct in thinking you’d be here...Hapyneth.”

And it was Sophia-san who’d come to call.

It was clear how angry she was with the vein popping on her forehead. I more or less understood why.

“Yesterday, I believe Cecilia-sama left you in charge of training the new maid, did she not? This is no time to be playing around in a place like this. We’ll be

returning to the mansion immediately. Ah, Youki-sama. Please allow me to thank you for accompanying the Young Miss to Dagaz Village. But I must say...I cannot approve of this statue. Now then, we shall take our leave.”

With a beautiful bow she grabbed the runaway Hapyneth by the scruff of her neck, and just like that she was dragged out of the room.

“...So this is where you were.”

This time, entering immediately behind Sophia-san, was Raven.

“Didn’t I tell you yesterday that we were heading out to Dagaz Village today to take the bandits Youki and Miss Aquarain caught into custody? We were supposed to depart this morning...but we were waiting on you, Duke. C’mon, let’s get going. Also Youki...when we get the chance, let’s hang out for real next time.”

“Oh...okay, next time then.”

“Next time...then. By the way, I think that statue has got to go. It’s different and all, but I’d definitely recommend getting a new one. ...C’mon, let’s go.”

“Captain, we’ll settle this next time!”

Maybe it was to keep him from running away again, but Raven took Duke by the arms like he was taking him in for questioning and left.

“...I guess that’s that.”

“Hey brat...you dirty dog, just what have you done to my body...”

Seeing as to how insults had come from all sides today, the gargoyle was irate. Even I was in shock over the matter. Sure I hadn't had much time to think of something, but it wasn't like I had just tossed something together at random!

“The Big Buddha was a big failure last time, so I even went to the trouble of thinking up something cool for this one...”

I thought the Sphinx was amazingly awesome...but for some reason no one else did. I bet it's all because I was reincarnated from elsewhere, and the inhabitants of this world had different aesthetic tastes, that had to be it. It looked like I needed to seriously study this world's fine arts.

“Forget about that though, this room is an absolute mess. At this rate the repair costs are gonna be ridiculous. ...I've got enough gold on hand, but I really wanna go bug Clayman right about now. It's been a while, but I think I'll go stop by the guild.”

“Hey, you're going to leave me looking like this?! Get your butt back here, you brat!!”

I ignored the Sphinx-gargoyle and headed out to the Guild to earn some money for the room repairs.

The guild was lively as always; it wasn't even noon and there were already a few adventurers knockin' 'em back. And as always, I went right to Clayman's desk, but...

“Huh?”

Clayman wasn't there. There was even a little handwritten sign that noted his absence.

Clayman, that sorry sod, he'd always been lazy and troublesome, but now he'd finally entered the realm of skipping work! Could it be, his wife had finally gotten tired of his ways and left him? And that had left him so mentally scarred that he'd had to be admitted to a psychiatric ward?!

“Um~ Pardon me...”

I was off in my own personal La-La Land of delusions when the pretty young receptionist lady that always worked next to Clayman called out to me.

“Oh, sorry about that. I was lost in thought.”

But I didn't add that the thought had been about one of her coworkers.

“No, it's fine...you're the person who always comes in to talk to the Assistant Guildmaster, right?”

And just when did I meet such an influential person of power?

“But the only person I talk to in the guild is Clayman...”

“Isn’t that what I said, the Assistant Guildmaster?”

“.....”

It wasn’t just not possible, it was impossible. At work he had 3 requisites: to always be lazy, difficult, and indifferent. The name Clayman was synonymous with “Lazybones”, and he’s the Assistant Guildmaster?!

I didn’t realize this world also had something like April Fool’s day. Surely Clayman was just waiting somewhere to jump out in surprise after writing that little note on his desk.

“Are you alright? You’ve gazed too long into the abyss, please return to reality!”

The female employee had grabbed ahold of my shoulders and was shaking me. After my head bobbed around, I finally regained my senses.

“Oh, sorry. My normal everyday routine has been disrupted in an unimaginable way that I just kinda...”

“Haha...I completely understand.”

“Oh, I’m sure you do.”

“However, although he may complain, he always does do his job well. Whether it’s the reception desk, sorting documents, breaking up fights between Adventurers, he can do pretty much anything around the Guild.”

“You certainly wouldn’t know it just looking at the guy.”

“Unfortunately with his usual countenance that’s all too true. But, his hard work speaks for itself.”

“Riiight...”

She had no reason to lie, so it was likely the truth.

Speaking of which, Clayman did say himself that he wasn’t normally a receptionist, didn’t he.

“Even during the Hero’s Parade, as a joke the Assistant Guildmaster said everyone but himself should take a paid holiday to go see it. And when he did, everyone took him seriously, and for three days he managed the Guild all by himself.”

So that was the day I first came to Minerva then. He was grumbling quite a bit to himself about it, but he did do all that work by himself in those following days.

Even with all his moaning and groaning he still did his job. And whenever I took on a large amount of quests, he always processed everything perfectly and easily.

“So...just what exactly is this Clayman-who-actually-does-a-good-job-at-work up to today?”

“It has to do with the Guild’s integrity, and is thus not a public matter. However, since you’re good friends with the Assistant Guildmaster, I’m sure it’d be all right to tell you. ...Can I trust you not to tell anyone else?”

“No problem.”

For privacy’s sake, I drew my ear close to her mouth.

“The truth is that he and his wife got into a lover’s quarrel. In the end, the Assistant Guildmaster suffered a grievous wound that will take a month to fully heal, and is currently hospitalized and getting medical treatment, and took a leave of absence.”

That was the second time today I’d been left slack jawed. I had a sense of déjà vu, but still felt like I should at least go pay him a visit.

“Could I trouble you to give me the details of where Clayman is hospitalized at? I’d like to pay him a visit.”

“Sure, that’s fine. The Assistant Guildmaster is currently being hospitalized in the best treatment facility in Minerva. You can find it at—”

After I finished speaking with the female employee, I found it was only about a 10 minute walk there from the guild. I thanked her for her help, and headed out to Minerva’s best medical clinic.

“...And so, that’s how you came about visiting me?”

“Yep.”

Clayman was sprawled out on a bed in the clinic.

Almost his entire body was covered in bandages, yet he still managed to have that same annoyed look on his face. He certainly didn't look like a patient sentenced to a month in the hospital. Still, this was all done by his wife, just what kind of monster was she to go this far?

“I heard you got into a fight with your wife. I bet you did something to get on her nerves, didn't you?”

I mean, this is Clayman we're talking about. If even at home he doesn't do housework, is lethargic, and still thinks everything is bothersome, it would definitely incite rage in his wife.

“You're right about that. It happened on the day of our wedding anniversary.”

Woah, this guy is the worst. What on earth did he do on their anniversary?

“Let me guess, you forgot your anniversary so your wife beat the crap out of you?”

Things like anniversaries were very important to girls. However, Clayman shook his head, dismissing my theory.

“Fuck you. Of course I remembered. The thing is, I had to think of a present to

get her. It was too much of a hassle so I procrastinated, and then the day of the anniversary came...”

“So you didn’t get her a gift at all? That’s how you ended up like this?”

“Well, I was out looking for a present, so hard infact, I wound up in a daze, and before I realized it, it was the middle of the night. I hurried back to the house, and my always expressionless wife was even more expressionless...”

“You’re an idiot.”

There was no hope of not ruining the anniversary. The present is optional, the important thing is celebrating and spending time together.

“Geez, it’s all such a pain in the ass...”

“It’s your own fault. You need to apologize to your wife!”

If he did it soon maybe he could still salvage this situation...or maybe not, but at least he might be able to avoid divorce!

“Naw, she ain’t mad anymore. Plus, she’s gonna come pick me up after she’s done with work today. She’s gonna nurse me back to health at home~”

‘I bet you’re jealous, right~?’ his smiling face seemed to brag. ...I knew it, it was deja vu, him talking like this. The truth was so far out of my expectations, I ended up just asking Clayman out of the blue—

“...Clayman, your wife, she’s a maid, right?”

“Oo! So you knew. But she’s not just any maid, she’s the Head Maid. Amazing, right?”

He proudly announced, almost as if he was praising himself, but it was at that moment I finally figured out who exactly Clayman’s wife was.

“Sophia-san...”

“Huh? How in hell do you know my wife’s name?”

Shit, I accidentally said it out loud. It wasn’t really something to panic about, so I wasn’t exactly worried. But, I didn’t want Clayman to get any funny ideas, so I quickly explained.

“Actually, I’m an acquaintance of the Young Mistress of the Aquarain household. Also, one of the maids there is my old friend. That’s how I knew about her.”

And with that, the case should close without any further suspicions. Sure enough, that skeptical look soon returned to his usual unmotivated gaze.

“Sorry, sorry. Didn’t mean to doubt you. But that’s right, there was that one time the Young Lady at my wife’s job dropped by to visit. I’m relieved, just thinking about if someone’d done something to my lovely wife...someone~”

For a split second I felt a large amount of killing intent directed at me.

With a face that serious, it was hard to believe this was the same lazy guy I knew. I guess he wasn't the Assistant Guildmaster just for show.

"Hey hey, point your hostility somewhere else! I'd never lay a hand on Sophia-san..."

"Ah, is that so. Okay then. Sorry 'bout that."

What's wrong with this guy? If he's that possessive of Sophia-san he shouldn't be screwing up his wedding anniversary. And where'd that serious face from just a moment ago get off to? It's already turned back into his dull everyday face.

Still, first Sophia-san, now Clayman, both of them were pretty big deals.

...It made me wonder how exactly they'd met.

"So uh, just where and how did you meet Sophia-san?"

"Huh? What's with the bolt from the blue?"

Probably because of the sudden change of topic, he gave me a dubious look. But as someone who'd fallen in love, this guy was more or less a success story if there ever was one. If I heard it from the source of a man whose love had turned into marriage...it could serve as great reference material.

"Come on, come on. Out with it."

“Hmm, well, I was getting tired of sleeping anyway. All right, I’ll tell you the story of our fateful encounter all the way through our lovey-dovey marriage ceremony.”

He clearly put on an attitude of looking down on me as he began, and I suddenly wanted to punch him in the face.

But, I was the one that brought it up and wanted to know, so I kept my fists down with all my might.

“So it all started when...”

From there, Clayman proceeded to regale me with his tale. It was supposed to be the story of how he met Sophia-san, but turned into how when he was young, he was hailed as a genius, and how awesome he was.

I hoped that it would lead into something more relevant soon, and nodded and responded when appropriate while listening intently. Apparently Clayman was a Solo Adventurer up until he was 18, and made Rank A all by himself.

He was such a genius that he could complete anything and everything with ease, and just when he felt his life had become boring, he met Sophia-san.

“So I was in the Guild, just sipping away on some alcohol at a table, no interest in anything. The Adventurer business was too damn boring, I just couldn’t get into it anymore.”

Other than drinking alcohol, that wasn't much different from how he was now. But anyhow, he had lost his motivation to work.

"Then someone called out to the likes of me, and that someone was Sophia!"

It looked as if he remembered that day in great detail, and his whole face lit up. Then, without any of his usual laziness, the tone of his voice became empowered.

"And what do you think she said when she walked up to me?"

What was this, a pop quiz? I didn't really give it much thought and just gave an offhanded answer.

"Did she want to be friends with you?"

"Ha!"

Clayman snorted at my answer. Is that how you treat someone after they've been listening intently to your story?

"Sophia came up to me and said, 'You look like you're strong and have some free time. If it's alright with you, I'd like to form a Party.'"

"Woah..."

Hearing the response, it definitely sounded like Sophia-san. 'You look like

you're strong and have some free time'...her insight was impeccable. It was easy to spot someone with a lot of time on their hands, but it was much harder to tell if someone was strong.

"I turned her down at first, but because I was drunk off my ass at the time, before I answered I copped a feel. Sophia's a beauty after all."

"You really are an idiot."

And just what would Sophia-san do if someone did that to her? Even without asking I knew the answer.

"She soon removed herself from my embrace, and with that expressionless face of hers, she knocked me around good. She mercilessly beat me without holding anything back until she was satisfied. Drunk though I was, in my whole lazy life of being able to do anything and everything, losing to Sophia was more than a little shocking."

"Let me rephrase that, you're a huge idiot."

There's no reason Sophia-san shouldn't have won against that carelessly lazy Clayman. Or maybe I should point out the fact that up to that point he thought he was the strongest person around?

"And that's how Sophia and I met."

"Wait, that's it?! What the hell happened after that?"

“The next day, I was the one who asked if we could be a party, and Sophia very willingly agreed.”

Agreeing to be in a party after this guy just copped a feel...but she was the one who originally asked him, so I guess it's not completely implausible?

“After that Sophia and I were golden. We even made a big name for ourselves.”

‘A big name for ourselves’, normally in a fantasy setting an awesome pair would be known by some kind of special title, wouldn't they?

“I bet it was some embarrassing chuuni couples name that would turn your ears red just from hearing it.”

“They called us ‘The Invincible Languorous Couple’.”

“What's with that totally unenviable pair name?!”

That name is 100% Clayman's fault. And with Sophia-san normally being expressionless, she may have actually appeared that way to some people. Poor Sophia-san.

“So after that you two were going steady?”

“That's just what the assholes around us called us. It was too much of a hassle for me to do anything about it, and Sophia just thought the whole idea was stupid and never rejected the name. And so it became permanent.”

“Is it really alright to leave that alone...? So soon after that you two tied the knot?”

Even if they were called such a weird couple, that might not have actually been the case. There should have been a moment when the magic happened.

“Yeah...marriage. Marriage, huh...”

He suddenly closed his eyes, immersed in his own memories, leaving me sitting here dying to know what happened... If I let him go on like that, I’d never hear the ending, so I made quick work of waking him up.

“Hey! I’m beggin’ ya, finish the story!”

“Uwa?! Ah, sorry, sorry, I suddenly got hit with a wave of nostalgia.”

I successfully pulled him out of his world of memories and back into the real world. Did I maybe do something bad...? Nah, he can reminisce after I go home.

“First of all, maybe I should tell you about the proposal that led to our getting married?”

“Eh?! Did that really happen?”

“You betcha, as our little duo became closer, seeds of love began to sprout. On one of our days off, we were on something of a date.”

“Love can come out of nowhere, huh?”

Rather than spontaneous combustion, it was more like spontaneous companionship.

“Well, right when I popped the question, a really terrible incident occurred...”

“...Do I really want to hear about this?”

Maybe he had to convince her parents, or maybe he had another lover on the side, or some other daytime soap opera scenario. Was it all right for an outsider like me to hear about this? Feeling my worried tension in the air, Clayman lightly laughed.

“I think you might be thinkin’ a bit too hard there. I’ll tell you this, it’s certainly not whatever you’re imagining.”

What Clayman said relieved me. Honestly, I’d seen so many soap operas in my previous life, I’d almost forgotten that they don’t actually happen in real life.

“Then what actually happened?”

“...I was the one to propose. With all the time we were spending together, I was falling more and more in love with Sophia every day. I had spent a life lazing away, but for the first time in my life I wanted to take something seriously.”

I'm sure he agonized over how to propose seriously without any hint of his normal laziness. All he had to do was just declare his honest feelings. There shouldn't have been any terrible occurrence about it.

"Ring in hand, I made sure to invite her out to a real classy place to eat. And then I asked her, 'Wanna get married?'"

"Isn't that normal?"

It wasn't even interesting, much less a disaster. What terrible thing could possibly happen?

"Sophia normally went along with whatever I said...but this time, when I asked her, she completely snapped. The result was me being laid up for half a year recovering from her assault."

Clayman went pale at the mere memory of the incident. I vaguely recalled Celia-san telling me a similar story. So it was about the day of their proposal.

"She should have said yes, what reason was there for her to refuse?"

"...I told Sophia she should stop being an Adventurer. Around that time, I talked about how I might like becoming the Assistant Guildmaster. I mean, we were talking about marriage, so I didn't think I had to tiptoe around the subject. And so, she snapped. Apparently, Sophia wanted to continue to be the 'Invincible Languorous Couple'. And while she was beating the shit out of me, I kept trying to convince her...and eventually she gave in."

"....."

There were so many comebacks I could make, I didn't even know where to start.

Why on earth did Sophia want to continue being known as the 'Invincible Languorous Couple', where the hell did talk of becoming an Assistant Guildmaster come from, but what I wanted to know the most was...

"...So in the end, you got married and have been living a lovey dovey life every since?"

"That's right!"

Clayman cracked a wide grin. I don't know why he didn't want to tell the story at first, it was certainly worth a listen, wasn't it? While I was lost in my own thoughts, there was a clanking sound as the door opened up behind me.

"Dear, I've come to pick you up...why is Youki-san here?"

Coming through the door was Sophia-san in her ever present maid outfit. I heard she was going to come see him, but wasn't this a little early?

"Ahaha...I'm always bothering Clayman at the Guild, so I came to see how he was doing. But I just noticed, it's not even noon, don't you have work Sophia-san...?"

"I see, you know my husband through the Guild. Today I was actually supposed to be on leave. But we suddenly had a new hire brought on board,

and Hapyneth skipped out on the job, it was just one problem after another, and all this before morning was even half over.”

Sophia-san answered in her normal expressionless and indifferent tone. So that’s why when she was chasing after Hapyneth earlier she seemed to be in such a bad mood.

“Honey, you came for me.”

“Honey?!”

Clayman calls Sophia-san Honey?? ... But Sophia-san very quickly went to Clayman’s side and said,

“And just who is your ‘Honey’?”

Sophia-san delivered a beautiful dropkick right into Clayman’s gut. Sophia-san watched, still expressionlessly, as Clayman clutched his stomach and tried not to blackout.

“You always call me Sophia, right?”

“No, it was just a little joke. Also I can see up your skirt.”

Clayman switched back to his usual lazy self and said something completely unnecessary. If you say something like that, she’s gonna kick you again...

“And what of it? It matters not.”

“It doesn’t matter?!”

This was definitely a strange turn of events, so surprising my jaw dropped and the words just flew out. To answer my outburst, Sophia-san turned around and stated—

“He’s my husband after all.”

I was left at a loss for words. Leaving me like that, Sophia-san put her arm under Clayman’s shoulder to help stand him up.



“Well, I’m off, see you back at the Guild. My body is ridiculously hardy, so I should be back in about a week.”

“Now then Youki-sama, if you’ll excuse us. For visiting my ailing husband, I humbly thank you.”

No matter how many times I saw it, Sophia-san's bows were always beautiful. She left with Clayman, him waving his hand goodbye. After saying their farewells, they both left the room.

"...I better get home."

I headed out of the clinic back to my lonely abode by myself.

Walking back in with a deflated aura, the Guy-turned-Sphinx asked what was wrong, but I ignored him and threw myself on the bed.

Seeing those two happily together, I wasn't able to admit how jealous I was. I also wanted to have a happy marriage like that.

Chapter 17: I tried to pay a call

The next day I got to know even more about Clayman and Sophia-san's lovey-doveyness.

I was so jealous of the two of them that I became love sick. I didn't want to do anything other than go see Cecilia. I passed on going to the guild in favor of writhing in agony on my bed.

"Hey, brat. I thought so yesterday, but honestly, you're being very annoying!"

"...It's whatever~. Just leave me alone~."

"Yeargh, I'm getting irritated just looking at you! I'm sure you're just longing to see that cleric girl, aren't you? So just get out of here and go see her!"

Guy's right. If I go see Cecilia, my love sickness will be instantly cured. But I hadn't made any plans to see her today. And the likelihood of her already being engaged in some clerical work was so high there was almost zero chance of her even being home. Plus, Guy's just running his mouth off like it's easy to meet up with Cecilia.

"...Even if I want to see her, I can't. Dammit!"

"Ugh, hey brat, what are you..."

I was extremely pissed off, so I changed Guy's appearance again. Instead of

the Sphinx, he was now the beautiful Venus de Milo. I might have been irritated, but I didn't do a half-assed job.

"Looks pretty good, if I do say so myself."

"Hogwash! The last one was better! Change me back!"

I ignored Guy's pissing and moaning and lied back down on the bed. I went to all the trouble of making a new statue, no way I was gonna change him back. I didn't pay any mind to Guy's furious complaints and went to sleep.

—

I awoke to the sound of someone knocking on the door. I got up off the bed, still half-asleep. I only slept for about an hour, and with such an insufficient amount of rest, my sleepy brain didn't want to work.

I scratched my head, wondering who could possibly be at the door.

"Youki-saaan, are you there?"

Wasn't that Cecilia's voice behind the door?

"I'm here, I'm here! Gimme just a minute!"

To think Cecilia would come and visit me! I quickly changed out of my sleepwear into my everyday clothes, making myself presentable. After quickly

picking up the room, I opened the door in the highest of spirits.

“Pardon my intrusion.”

“...Pardon.”

There was Cecilia in everyday clothes, with a hat and glasses to hide her identity. Also disguised in plain clothes, and not her normal maid attire, was Hapyneth.

What was the story behind Hapyneth being here too? I was stoked that Cecilia came to see me, but I had hoped it would be just the two of us... I guess that was just wishful thinking. Anyway, Guy was already in the room, and just her coming here was enough to put me on cloud nine.

“I apologize, coming to call without notice. I hope I’m not disturbing you?”

Cecilia looked very apologetic. Of course she wasn’t disturbing me! Rather, she was more than welcome. I wanted her to come. To treat the love sickness of wanting to see her, this was just what the doctor ordered. Hapyneth had a strange look on her face as if she could see what I was thinking.

“...Pervert.”

She said as she looked down on me with disdain. Why did she feel the need to go so far as to say that? What’s wrong with thinking about the girl I like?! As Hapyneth and I glared at each other, Cecilia humbly asked,

“Excuse me...Youki-san?”

“What is it, Cecilia?”

“May we please enter the room?”

“...Oh, right.”

Even if we were having a throwdown, it’s not like we couldn’t continue inside the room. I put our staring contest on pause and let them into the room.

“...Captain?”

Immediately after entering, Hapyneth asked after me in a confused manner.

“What’s up?”

“...Where’s Guy?”

“Isn’t he over there?”

I pointed to the Venus de Milo. He didn’t say anything, making me wonder if he was asleep. After staring at Guy for five seconds, Hapyneth only said one word.

“...No.”

“Why not?!”

It can't be that she found fault with this statue too? First the Sphinx, now the Venus de Milo?! I made it while I was in a foul mood, but I don't remember cutting any corners.

“What do you think, Cecilia?”

“M-me?! Um...”

Suddenly being asked to comment on the topic, she faltered at first. I couldn't help thinking she was adorable while I waited for her answer.

“I think, it's a bit unappealing...”

“Eeehhh?!”

I struck out with Cecilia too. That's three losses in a row. I could only feel that the world of fine arts was too profound for me at present.

“...So, what brings the two of you here today?”

I'd have to think a lot harder about what to change Guy into next time, but for now I asked why those two were here.

“...Laugh at Captain.”

“And just what do you mean by that, Hapyneth-san?”

Going out of her way to bother Cecilia into accompanying her on her day off, Hapyneth came here just to make fun of me?

I can think of a million more productive ways to spend a day off. Once again, Hapyneth and I were staring each other down until Cecilia came in to mediate.

“Hapyneth-chan, please don’t joke around. And Youki-san, please control yourself...”

Under Cecilia’s instruction, we both backed off. Back in the Demon Lord’s Castle this was a normal occurrence, but this time I suppose it was fine not to deliver the finishing blow.

“Have you both finally calmed down? Then let’s get down to business...except that we really did come by just to visit.”

I thought they were here for something important, but I guess not.

In order to lessen Hapyneth’s burden and get Teal-chan hired as a maid at the mansion, Cecilia had quickly finished up her work in Dagaz village. And now she had the day off.

I was glad for Hapyneth getting an extra helping hand.

“Which reminds me, how has Shiek-kun been lately...?”

Cecilia recalled what had happened to Shiek at Dagaz village. Because of Mirror, the hero of the Gallis Empire, Shiek had been wounded both body and soul.

“Well, he still seems to be depressed about it.”

“I see...that’s quite worrying.”

It wasn’t just Cecilia; Duke, Hapyneth, and I were all worried about him.

Still, it was a steep hurdle for him to get over. He didn’t come back to the Inn last night either, so I had no idea where he was.

“...Okay now.”

“Eh?”

“Eh?”

Hapyneth made both of us exclaim in surprise. Just yesterday, Hapyneth was over here agonizing about it, what changed in only a day?

“Has Shiek finally snapped out of it?”

“...Not yet. But Celia-san has a plan.”

“My mother does?!”

When we interrogated Hapyneth further, we found out Shiek was staying at the Aquarain mansion.

“You didn’t know, Cecilia?”

“No. Yesterday I spent all day reporting about the happenings we encountered in Dagaz village...”

So she didn’t know because she’d been too busy lately.

“...Story.”

Yesterday, Celia-san had some business in town. When she was done and getting back in her carriage, she found Shiek trudging along by himself. Noticing something was amiss, Celia-san took Shiek into the carriage and headed back to the mansion.

“...Did Mother essentially kidnap him then?”

“Something like that, but since he’s under my care, I’ll forgive her.”

“...Continuation.”

After they returned, Celia-san got the whole story from Shiek.

She silently listened to him as he recounted how Mirror completely crushed and humiliated him, and he was so vexed he began to cry. She held onto him and gently stroked his head until he ran out of tears.

And once he had exhausted himself from crying, he fell asleep and stayed overnight at the mansion. It should also be mentioned it took about 30 minutes to get the whole story out of Hapyneth.

“I didn’t realize something like that occurred at the mansion yesterday. I could expect no less of my mother.”

Maybe it was because she was in the business of healing others, but Cecilia was touched by her mother’s ability to soothe Shiek’s pain. Cecilia herself had tried to cheer him up, but it looks like no one but Celia-san could pull it off.

Considering Shiek’s circumstances, it looked like I hit the mark thinking that, of any of us, Celia-san could break him out of his stupor.

“...Message.”

“For me?”

“...Relinquish custody of Shiek.”

“Wait wait, why didn’t you mention that earlier?”

That really did sound like something a kidnapper would request. But, even hearing it said like that, I honestly didn’t have a problem with it.

“Tell her I said it’s fine.”

“...Understood.”

“I had planned to ask her anyway. This just eliminates the need for me to ask her in person, I guess.”

“Is that so?”

Cecilia was the only one who looked confused. Hapyneth and I knew Shiek well, so for us, it was just a matter of course.

“Well, yeah. For Shiek, Celia-san is more like a mother to him than his own mother was. As for why, it’s a long story, so I’ll tell you some other time.”

It was a very important story about Shiek, and I didn’t feel comfortable talking about it unless he himself were here. I would tell Cecilia later when the chance arose.

“Okay, I understand.”

“So, now that the matter of Shiek and Celia-san has been settled...I have something else to discuss.”

I quickly changed the subject to what I’d witnessed of Sophia-san and Clayman’s lovey-dovey married shenanigans yesterday.

I'd heard Clayman's side of the story, but hadn't had a chance to hear Sophia-san's.

If anyone, Cecilia should be able to shed some light on Sophia-san's adventurer days.

"Yesterday I heard a friend of mine was hospitalized, so I went to pay him a visit. When I got there, I found out he was Sophia-san's husband."

I was thinking about how nice they had it when they were regaling me with their story, and told Cecilia about it. Starting from how Clayman got hospitalized, to the vomit-inducing lovey-dovey atmosphere that eventually made me go home. But, halfway through my tale, I found myself getting frustrated with how good Clayman had it, and was downright irritated by the end.

Even that Clayman had tied the knot. He lived every day in wedded bliss with Sophia-san. I hadn't even gotten a girlfriend yet!

Thanks to the irrational anger, the two looked at me curiously as I became more and more intense. When I finally finished the story, Cecilia opened her mouth and said,

"Actually, I just spoke with Sophia-san yesterday. You were there too, weren't you Hapyneth-chan?"

Hapyneth nodded her head affirmatively.

“...Directly after...severe scolding.”

“Right...”

It must have happened just after she was dragged back from being discovered to have skipped out on work. Just from looking at the expression on Hapyneth’s face, it must have been a heavy scolding. It couldn’t have been revenge on Hapyneth for making Sophia-san late for her fun time with Clayman...no, no, Sophia-san isn’t that kind of person...right?

Without so much as a worry, Cecilia began to talk about the events from yesterday.

“Yesterday, after eating breakfast, I was putting together my report about Dagaz village, but I took a brief respite in the courtyard when...”

At the entrance to the courtyard, she caught Sophia-san scolding the ever-expressionless Hapyneth. Spotting Cecilia as she was passing by, Hapyneth begged Cecilia with her eyes to save her. The kind Cecilia couldn’t bear to leave her like that, and stepped in to mitigate the situation.

“Sophia-san, I think it’s about time to forgive Hapyneth-chan...”

Hearing Cecilia’s voice, Sophia-san immediately bowed elegantly before her.

“I bid you good morning, my lady. However, because Hapyneth left in the middle of work to go visit Youki-sama, I must take special care so it does not happen again.”

Sophia-san declared sternly, and Cecilia was unable to say anything back. As Sophia-san carefully explained the situation to Cecilia, firmly crushing her last ray of hope, Hapyneth was left in despair.

Thus, the reprimand continued...and, by chance, Cecilia also stayed. For both Hapyneth and Cecilia, the lecture seemed to last forever.

“Haah...I suppose that’s enough for today. Please take care not to do this again in the future.”

“...Yes.”

Hapyneth was left in fairly poor spirits, and Cecilia was keenly aware of how pitiful the girl was at the moment. It was her own fault; I don’t think there needed to be such a fuss over it.

“Now then, it simply won’t do to dawdle here any longer.”

“...Was there something going on today?”

Sophia-san appeared to be in a hurry for some reason, which made Cecilia ask what it could possibly be about.

“No, I simply meant to take today as a holiday...”

Thinking the maid must have been overworked since Cecilia brought Tiel-chan back with her, Cecilia quickly went to bow and apologize when,

“My lady, it is no fault of yours, please do not worry yourself over it...if anyone here is at fault then...”

She quickly glanced at Hapyneth. Doing so caused Hapyneth to curl up into a ball out of fear. She couldn't handle the glare of a former Rank-A adventurer.

“Now, now, Hapyneth-chan is reflecting on her actions...”

Fearing another lecture, Cecilia attempted to pacify Sophia-san. Thanks to her persuasion, Sophia-san remembered she was in a hurry.

“I suppose you're right. She, herself, has expressed remorse, and I must quickly be away to the Medical Clinic.”

“Medical Clinic?! Sophia-san, are you feeling unwell?!”

Cecilia was mistaken again, this time thinking that Sophia-san needed to go to the medical clinic because she was feeling under the weather, and in her confusion tried to figure out what was wrong. She had finally gotten a holiday to rest her weary body, but forced herself to come back to the mansion...were likely the thoughts running through Cecilia's head.

“My lady, please calm yourself, I am in perfect health. I was only going to visit my husband.”

“...Your husband? My apologies, I misunderstood. But pray tell, what happened to your husband?”

“He suffered an injury that would take one month to fully recover from...”

She stated in her normal indifferent tone, not showing the slightest hint of anxiety. Cecilia was surprised, and exclaimed,

“H-how terrible?! What on earth caused such an injury?”

Cecilia understood from her mother that Sophia-san used to be an adventurer, as well as a duo in the guild with Clayman, eventually marrying him. All the more hearing that a former rank-A adventurer would suffer such a grievous wound, she couldn't possibly imagine what happened.

Seeing Cecilia so worried, Sophia-san realized her choice of words caused the girl's troubled expression, and set to assuage her fears.

“Please excuse my poor choice of phrasing. Truthfully, you could say he was taking responsibility for his actions...”

“...What?”

At that, even the forgotten Hapyneth couldn't help but also be dumbfounded with her mouth agape. If I'd been there, I likely would have reacted the same.

“Um...what do you mean by that?”

“...Explanation.”

After regaining her composure, Cecilia sought a proper explanation from Sophia-san's cryptic comment. Even Hapyneth, who had been afraid to jump into the conversation until that point, desired to know the truth.

"As I must not delay further, I shall be brief: I spent our anniversary alone, and in my anger I wound up beating him violently."

"That's..."

"...Speechless."

That would have been the perfect chance for a great comeback, yet neither of them pounced on the opportunity Sophia-san presented.

Hapyneth aside, to think that Cecilia would let it slip by...

"But, to think that he was late because he was searching for a present for me...It is very like my husband, I must say."

Hearing that response, the two clearly saw Sophia-san chuckle a bit. In the end, Sophia-san left the two like that as she excused herself, skillfully turned away, and left the mansion still in her maid uniform.

"And that concludes what happened yesterday."

"Ah man, they're totally a lovey-dovey couple, aren't they?"

What's with that sudden affection?! Now I really wanted to know what would have happened if Clayman had actually bought her a present.

"Hapyneth, you haven't run into Sophia-san yet today, have you?"

"...Encountered."

"How was she?"

"...Terrified me."

Taking care of Clayman, I thought she'd be in better spirits. Does that mean, Clayman did something again?

"...Smiling."

"..."

Oh, so she was in good spirits. What terrified Hapyneth was just Sophia-san's uncharacteristic smile. I kinda wanted to see it myself. And just as I thought that, I realized I still hadn't heard what I'd come to desire to learn!

I still didn't hear anything about their adventurer days! I'd already had enough of their lovey-dovey tales! I wanted the dirt on their crazy adventures they had together!

“Cecilia, do you have any stories from when Sophia-san was still an adventurer?”

“If you ask me so suddenly...oh, I do know one that my mother told me.”

“Tell me, tell me!”

I urged Cecilia on. Interesting story, here we come! Seeing me acting like an overexcited kid, Cecilia laughed to herself.

“All right, here’s what I heard.”

—

“...That’s enough, Cecilia.”

Looking outside, the day was almost over. After she started, Cecilia regaled me an episode of the “The Invincible Languorous Couple” without stopping to eat or drink anything...but...

“Why do all their stories eventually end so sweetly...”

“S-sorry.”

Looking forlorn, Cecilia apologized. I wasn’t really blaming her, she’s not the one at fault so there’s no need to apologize.

Hapyneth got bored halfway through and fell sound asleep on top of my bed.

“Seriously, what’s with those two...”

She told me a story of soon after Sophia-san and Clayman met.

It was fine that they formed a duo, but Sophia-san seemed to have some reservations about it. Before partnering with Clayman, she’d formed parties with numerous other adventurers. However, Sophia-san very much went at her own pace, so she didn’t meld well with other adventurers.

It often ended up that the powerful Sophia-san would be unhurt, but her fellow party members would suffer grievous wounds. The other members would call out Sophia-san for choosing quests outside of their comfort zone, and eventually the parties would disband.

However, the lazy Clayman, for all his moaning and groaning, still managed to keep up on the quests Sophia-san selected.

Then, one day, about a month after their duo formed, sitting across from each other at a table in the Guild while eating...

“...If it’s that bothersome for you, why don’t we just disband the party?”

Thinking Clayman was forcing himself to keep up with her, Sophia-san proposed the break up the duo. Clayman gulped down his alcohol, then brought the glass to rest on the table as he looked Sophia-san dead in the eye.

“These quests are damn annoying, it’s true, but being with you, Sophia, isn’t troublesome at all, so it’s impossible to break up.”

After that, the seeds of love began to sprout...’the hell kind of story is this?!

Again, it was a tale of how the “The Invincible Languorous Couple” came to be.

Once, some brave rogues foolishly tried to hit on Sophia-san.

Sophia-san was sitting at the Guild’s bar while Clayman was taking care of some business elsewhere, when a drunk threesome came in. Of all the people they could have chosen to get involved with, they chose Sophia-san.

They hit on Sophia-san while laughing with vulgarity.

“Excuse me, but can I help you with something?”

She asked in her normal tone of voice. Unafraid, she dealt with the rogues without any resistance, causing them to falter. And that was when Clayman returned.

“Oh, they hitting on you? What a bother. Troubling isn’t it? Why don’tcha come over here Sophia, we’ll go to another bar.”

That’s normally the part where you rescue the damsel in distress, so he gestured for Sophia-san to accompany him. Sophia-san slipped out between the rogues and went to Clayman’s side.

“If I must. Where shall we go?”

Of course, the rogues wouldn't let them get away that easily, and cornered the two. However...

“Agh, what a drag, seriously, knock that shit off...”

He grabbed one of the rogues' shoulders and forced him to sit, effectively stopping the fight before it started. I'm sure he thought it'd be too much hassle to actually fight them. A particularly persistent rogue got sent flying by a kick from Sophia-san.

A Guild employee just happened to witness the event, and seeing Clayman's lethargic laziness and Sophia-san's strength, together she dubbed them the “The Invincible Languorous Couple”. That's how they wound up with the name of their duo.

That by itself would have made for an interesting story.

But, the actual ending of the story took place shortly after that incident, when they went to a different bar to go drinking again. Amidst their complaints about the rogues, Clayman said,

“Jeezus, what a bunch of aggravating assholes. Interrupting my precious time with Sophia...”

Yep, that's what he said.

...Gaaaawwwwd.

Damn he was pretentious in the past. He probably thought he was the strongest there ever was. The Clayman of today had considerably matured into an adult. All hail the lazy Assistant Guildmaster.

“Well, it’s time I take my leave. Hapyneth-chan, it’s time to wake up.”

Cecilia gently shook the sleeping Hapyneth awake.

“...Finished?”

Cecilia pulled the still-sleepy girl out of bed.

“Now then, if you’ll excuse me. ...Also, Youki-san, perhaps you might be interested in going Clariness Castle?”

“Huh?”

“I said...perhaps. Well then.”

Without any explanation, Cecilia went back home.

Me, go to the castle?!

Not understanding a thing, several days passed, and I really did end up going to the castle.

Chapter 18: I went to the castle

“Err.....Who is that?” [Youki]

This incident happened a few days after both Cecilia and Happiness had proven that Clayman and Sophia-san are a lovey-dovey married couple.

As I adjusted my clothing to prepare myself for another day of accepting guild requests, I heard a knock at the door.

Wondering who it was, I went outside to find a soldier clad in metallic armour, wearing a headpiece, and carrying a sword hanging at his waist.

“You must be Youki-sama. Nice to meet you. I’m Kite, a knight from the Kingdom of Clariness, in the third division.”

“Haa, nice meeting you too.” [Youki]

I bowed my head in response to the soldier’s polite greeting. He might have introduced himself as Kite but, what business could a knight from the castle have with me?.....Could Duke have done something wrong? That speculation seemed entirely plausible to me.

But, judging from the exchange with the soldier earlier, I might be the one he was looking for. It appeared that he had wanted me to come along to the castle.....Come to think of it, Cecilia did mention that I might be paying a visit to the castle the other day.

It didn’t seem as though I could refuse it. Might I possibly have done

something wrong to be put into this situation? Since I couldn't recall anything, and it would be bad to decline the request, I reluctantly went along with him when I was told that a carriage had arrived to pick me up.

“.....Nn?” [Youki]

Upon leaving the inn, I noticed a familiar looking carriage waiting there. That carriage belongs to the Aquarain family. In other words.....

“Youki-san.” [Cecilia]

Once I got into the carriage, Cecilia was inside just as expected.

And.....

“Long time Captain~” [Sheik]

For some reason, Sheik was inside the carriage too. Where did the dark atmosphere around him the other day disappeared to? He had bounced back to his former cheerful self that I knew once again. Celia-san deserved the credit for this. I'm glad he was back to his old self again.

“Captain~ Vice-Captain~ Hetare1 Captain~” [Sheik]

.....Actually, it might have been better for him to remain gloomy for a little longer. He became even more irritating the moment he got back on his feet. Even though the space inside the carriage was tight, he climbed atop my head and started riding on me, frolicking around with an innocent looking smile.

“Hey, stop riding on my head!” [Youki]

“Don’t want to. Isn’t it fine since it’s comfortable up here~” [Sheik]

“There’s no way that’s possible! Hurry up and get down.” [Youki]

Cecilia appeared to be watching over us warmly as Sheik continued on with his childish antics, despite the complicated expression I was making on my face.

Could you please do something about Sheik instead? While we were having such exchange among ourselves, the carriage slowly departed to the castle.

rattle rattle I gazed at the scenery of the Imperial Capital which I was already familiar with through the window from the shaking carriage.

In the end, Sheik never budged.

Regardless of what I said to him, he remained obstinate and refused to get down so I had given up on persuading him.

I guess it’s fine. This scenario felt really nostalgic to me too.

He should be getting down once we reached Clariness Castle, I supposed. Speaking of which.....

“By the way, why was I summoned to the castle? Along with Sheik.” [Youki]

I pointed at Sheik atop my head. I had no recollection of being called over to the castle at all. It was the same in Sheik’s case too. Based on the conversation we had before we parted previously, Cecilia might have known something so I requested the explanation from her.

“Yes, I guess I should clarify it.” [Cecilia]

Cecilia nodded and began the explanation.

“Youki-san, the three of us went to Dagaz Village the last time, am I right?”
[Cecilia]

“Yeah we did.” [Youki]

That incident was still fresh in my memory so I couldn’t have possibly forgotten about it.

“I remembered it clearly that only the elderly people came to me for the treatment at that time.” [Youki]

The ones who went over to Cecilia were mainly love-struck men while Sheik’s place was flooded with women with hearts in their eyes.

Come to think of it, there were quite a number of foolish villagers who were looking at Cecilia with erotic desire and made a pass at her, so I hid myself and casted magic on them as retribution. I kept that a secret from Cecilia and the village mayor. Since the bandits attacked the village on the same day I delivered the retribution, the unsettling feeling inside me disappeared and restored my peace of mind.

“A-Ahaha, I guess something like that did happen too. However—” [Cecilia]

“Come to think of it, Dagaz village was where we met Tiel-chan and that idiot Goyle too right?” [Sheik]

Sheik who was riding on my head suddenly cut into the conversation.

“What do you mean by idiot Goyle?” [Youki]

Gai would be angry if he were to hear this.....No, I think Tiel-chan would be angrier.

“That’s because he is an idiot~” [Sheik]

Ahaha~ He suddenly burst into laughter. He might have recalled the incident that happened when Gai had dozed off in the ruins. Could you please not laugh when you’re riding on someone’s head?

“Certainly if anyone were to hear that story, they would feel the same way too....” [Youki]

Tiel-chan didn’t know of the episode that led Gai to becoming the village’s guardian deity. Although, even if she were to find out, I have a feeling that she would end up misinterpreting it and draw the wrong conclusion. “As expected of Guardian Deity-sama. He wasn’t able to go back because he had been protecting the village up till now.”

The impression I got when I first met her was that she was an intellectual literary girl who, has been in poor health yet has a calm state of mind in everything.

However, she would be uncontrollable once she starts talking about Gai or when they are together. That is something that we need to be careful of.

Gai didn't seem to dislike it too in particular so nothing can be said about that situation.

"See? Aa~ it was really interesting, wasn't it? Idiot Goyle~" [Sheik]

"Oioi....you're laughing too much there. You're being rude to Gai." [Youki]

"Captain's laughing too." [Sheik]

"Ugh....." [Youki]

I couldn't retort back at that remark.

Undeniably, I still find the story about Gai interesting regardless of how many times I hear it. Not only was Sheik my former subordinate, but I was also deceiving a child like him. On seeing so, Cecilia cut into our conversation without reservation.

"Erm~ Can I go on with the story now.....?" [Cecilia]

""Ah!...."" [Youki & Sheik]

We ended up getting excited among ourselves, forgetting about the essential explanation that Cecilia was giving earlier.

Cecilia looked at us with a wry smile. Despite being the one who requested the explanation from her, I wound up derailing the subject and made a racket with Sheik. I'm seriously the worst.

“I’m sorry, Cecilia. Hey Sheik, you too.” [Youki]

“Cecilia onee-chan, sorry” [Sheik]

He got down from my head and sat himself in seiza so he could apologize. Of course, I was lowering my head too.

“It’s fine. Both of you, please raise your heads.” [Cecilia]

We lifted our heads up after being prompted by kind-hearted Cecilia. I’m glad she had forgiven us. I was planning to make another confession sooner or later so it wouldn’t be possible if she were to start hating me now.

I wonder when I can genuinely convey my feelings to her again. Although, that matter is currently unrelated to the subject in hand so I should focus in listening to Cecilia’s story this time.

“Then I’ll continue on. Pertaining to Dagaz Village, the treatment of the villagers and the subjugation of the bandits weren’t reported to the castle directly in particular. No one has actually witnessed the attack on Gai-san too so.....if these were somehow concealed then there wouldn’t be any problems.” [Cecilia]

If that’s the case then, the only other thing that happened in Dagaz Village was.....

“By chance, could it be about that hero who screwed around with us?” [Youki]

At the mention of that hero, Sheik trembled. It appears that Sheik still

remembers him.

Even when the opponent was right before his eyes, he wasn't able to save Gai and ended up losing in the one-sided fight.

He might have bounce back from his depression but his mental injury has yet to recover completely. I'll gently pat his head.

“.....I'm fine Captain. I'm all right now.” [Sheik]

I had initially thought he was trembling as he was casting his gaze down, but, when he raised his face up, I realized that it was still the same Sheik with an innocent smile on his face.

My worries were apparently unwarranted as Sheik doesn't seem to be bounded by his past any longer. I'm really glad I had left him to Celia-san.

“Sheik-kun, are you really alright?” [Cecilia]

Was Cecilia worried about Sheik too?

“Un. I have decided to be stronger so I will not lose to anyone anymore. So I'm fine.....Besides, I made a promise to Celia-san that I will splatter that guy once I become stronger.” [Sheik]

Sheik was making a seemingly dangerous vengeful oath with a pleasant smile over his face. Just how did Celia-san exchange that promise with Sheik? I am highly curious about it but, our conversation will derail once again if I were to ask him about it now. I endured it so Cecilia could continue with her explanation.

“.....It was just as what Youki-san has said. It’s the Gallis Empire’s Hero, Mirror. The fact that he had come to Clariness Kingdom to gather intelligence has to be reported to the castle.” [Cecilia]

“Well I guess that’s true.” [Youki]

In the worst-case scenario, if we have not reported the information about that guy, just like the Principle of Causality, it might somehow develop into a situation that leads to war.

Moreover, this also concerns the artificial demon’s weapon. There is also a possibility that they might be mass producing it. Considering Cecilia’s standpoint, she had no choice but to relay this information. The problem is.....

“How much have you informed them about us?” [Youki]

Since it has come to this, there would be various problems arising from that report. To start with, it would be about Gai who was assaulted by Mirror, as well as me and Sheik. And, how we defeated that guy.

If she had informed them about the artificial demon sword (Magic Eater), then the likelihood of Cecilia whose constitution is magic defeating him was really low. It would be bad to expose my real identity at the same time too.....

“.....This is really a grave situation but, I’ll try to think of a way somehow. So, please be assured that I will be able to keep Sheik-kun and Youki-san’s identity hidden.” [Cecilia]

Apparently she will try doing something about it one way or the other. Although, I wonder how she went about with the report. Cecilia handed me a written paper containing all the details that she has relayed to the castle so I

tried reading it.

The particulars about Gai were not stated but the written details were mainly on how Cecilia, Sheik and I discovered Mirror, who was happily killing demons on his own volition when we were suppressing the bandits.

In addition, the person had already acknowledged it himself that the main reason he came to Clariness Kingdom was to gather intelligence. We ended up engaging him in a battle after that. Even though he had used various artificial demon weapons against us, we somehow managed to corner him to a river and he fell into the water in the midst of the fight.

“.....Will these be fine?” [Cecilia]

“Somehow....” [Youki]

There were a few parts in which facts and lies were blended together, making it look like a fine piece of work. Nonetheless, it was still rather dubious if we could deceive them with this so it felt scary.

Cecilia did say that she would manage it somehow but, will it be all right?

shuffle shuffle Probably assuming that the complicated discussion was finally over, Sheik started climbing atop my head again and rode on me.

Well, I'll just let him be this time. I am currently feeling anxious on what I should do once we reached the castle so it couldn't be helped. Cecilia didn't seem to know what will be awaiting us at the castle too.

In our present state of unease, we unknowingly arrived at our destination.

Chapter 19: I met the King

“Eh!? An audience with His Majesty!? We weren’t informed of that…….”
[Cecilia]

What should we do once we reach the castle?

When Cecilia tried confirming it with the soldier at the castle, it was unexpected to be told that the King had wanted an audience with us. Cecilia who became panic-stricken desperately inquired further details from the soldier.

It was my first time seeing Cecilia looking this distraught.

On the other hand, Sheik was looking around restlessly.

It is simply because the situation is similar to when the Aquarain’s house was being compared to the Demon’s castle. Both places are worlds apart. It gave me a little peace of mind now, since we had already forbidden him to speak beforehand.

While Cecilia was arguing with the soldier, I tried recalling back on the stories that I’ve heard concerning the King of Clariness Kingdom.

Darts Horta Clariness is the current King of Clariness Kingdom. Despite being the third Prince, he’s a talented individual who has ascended the throne, after defeating his two older brothers. In the last fight against the Demon’s army that persisted for 10 years, he went to the battlefield at the mere age of 15 and gained numerous military achievements.

Even when I was still in the Demon's castle, I had heard of the rumours pertaining to a Prince from a certain country somewhere who is excessively strong. In spite of the unexpected assassination attempts by his two brothers, he covered for them and expelled them from the country under the pretense of marrying them into the bride's family.

By the way, notwithstanding their own incompetency on the battlefield, they vented their anger out on the soldiers who they deemed to be useless and did nothing except messing around day in, and day out. In a way, expelling them from the country was the right thing to do.

Then, three years ago, he finally inherited the throne from his father and also the former King, Darc Malta Clariness.

Half of the story was actually obtained from the rumours while the other half was heard from Raven.

It's really amazing for someone to be able to succeed the throne at the age of 25. This is something that is impossible for me.

Based on what I heard from the rumour, he has the ability to be a hero himself. Hence if he were not a Prince, he might have replaced Yuuga as a hero at that time. Well, whoever the hero is, they would not stand a chance against me anyhow.

When you get right down to it, I'm still the best among them. That was, what I was thinking of when Cecilia finally returned after her long dispute with the soldier. Judging from her facial expression, it didn't seem to be a bad news.

“Did you manage to get the story out of him?” [Youki]

“Yes. Apparently King-sama has summoned us because he has something to say to us personally.” [Cecilia]

“Did he want to know about the incident that happened in Dagaz Village in detail?” [Youki]

“Probably.....” [Cecilia]

Then it might be bad if we do not get our stories to match here. The truth about Gai or about how I fought after transforming back into a demon must be kept a secret at all costs. It would be bad if our stories were to clash since it might end up arousing his suspicions.

“Then, the only thing that is worrying me now is....” [Youki]

Cecilia and I both glanced towards a certain direction at the same time, resting our eyes on a restless looking figure there. Sheik has been looking around the castle anxiously since earlier. This guy is the one worrying me the most at the moment.....

“....I’m feeling uneasy.” [Youki]

“Same here.....” [Cecilia]

Cecilia and I have persuaded Sheik not to say anything unnecessary numerous times already and Sheik has nodded in response, giving us positive affirmations

every single time. Possibly due to the desperate look on our faces as we persistently cautioned him, he ended up staying silent the entire time.

“Got it? Absolutely do not say anything unnecessary!” [Youki]

“Sheik-kun, please be careful alright? We’ll not be putting our heads in a noose, am I right?!” 1 [Cecilia]

While we were using all means of persuasion on Sheik, the presence of a soldier approaching us, silenced us instantly.

“Please excuse me. It’s almost time for me to show you the way to the audience room.....May I know if it’s alright?” [soldier]

“Ah, yes.....it’s fine.” [Cecilia]

“Then please come this way.....” [solider]

With the soldier in the lead, we entered the castle. Was Cecilia already accustomed to situation like this? She appears to have regain her composure while I’m still feeling rather nervous here. On the other hand, the furniture in the castle seemed to have piqued Sheik’s interest so I couldn’t feel any feelings of anxiety coming from him. Sheik might probably be the most carefree one among us now.

We arrived at the front of a huge door before long. The audience room must be right beyond this door.

I swallowed my saliva with a gulp. I had audience with the Demon Lord numerous times already back when I was still in the demon castle so, I could probably make use of that experience to go through this somehow. Sheik wise.....is worrisome. The soldier opened the door.

The style is not much different than when I had an audience with the Demon Lord the last time. A long red carpet was spread across on the floor from the entrance to the end, and the figure of a man could be seen sitting on a throne.

The individual sitting there might be the one who had called for our presence, the current King of Clariness, Darts Horta Clariness.

On his left stood a female knight, possibly standing guard while on his right was a man clad in expensive looking clothes and wearing glasses. He might possibly be a minister or someone in similar position.

For security reasons, there were several dozens of knights standing guard on each side of the room as well.

When prompted by the soldier, we moved ahead and stopped several steps from the throne to kneel and lower our heads before the King.

Fortunately, even though Sheik doesn't seem to be familiar with this etiquette, he wasn't oblivious to the situation. He proceeded well in imitating us and somehow got through the predicament.

"My apologies for summoning all of you here without alerting you in advance. I am the King of the Clariness Kingdom, Darts Horta Clariness.....It felt way too stiff. I'm sorry but, could we drop all the formalities and speak in a more casual tone?" [King Darts]

Is that question directed to us? No, it appears that he was speaking to the female knight beside him.

“Your Majesty, I do not agree with that. Cecilia Aquarain aside, the other two people are having the audience with Your Majesty for the first time. If Your Majesty does not portray the majesty, befitting a ruler of a country here...”
[Female Knight]

“Don’t be so stiff, Sylvia~” [King Darts]

All of the sudden, he grabbed her shoulder and pulled her close. The female knight’s face became beet red when their faces drew close.

What’s up with these two? Are they both actually in an intimate kind of relationship? A sweet pink aura seemed to be emanating from them.

Even though the knights remained standing upright, the minister could be heard drawing a huge sigh as he said, “Again....”

It doesn’t seem to be Cecilia’s first time encountering this kind of scene too since there wasn’t any expression on her face at all. While Sheik is.....why are you sleeping there!?

“Um....so does Your Majesty have anything that you need to speak to us about?” [Youki]

After what it seemed like 5 minutes of watching them confirming their love for each other, I moved on to the main subject.

“Nn.....? Aaa....my apologies. We might have entered our own world unintentionally.” [King Darts]

Unintentionally my ass, this bastard riajuu!.....That was what I wanted to say but since the other party is a King, all I can do is just curse him silently in my heart.

The female knight seemed to resume as always as if nothing had happened. Will this country be alright.....

“Then let’s cut to the chase. I have called you all here pertaining to the incident that happened in Dagaz Village. There doesn’t seem to be anything wrong with the report I received from Cecilia Aquarain but.....there is still something that I still can’t quite put together yet.” [King Darts]

Uwaaa....was it just as I thought?

Cecilia and I exchanged look, confirming with each other to match our stories as discussed earlier.

“King Darts, may I know what was it that you are not able to understand?” [Cecilia]

From our previous arrangements, we have decided that Cecilia, being the one who has the highest amity with the King to be the first one to answer the questions.

“Hmm, based on the report, Gallis Empire’s hero, Mirror, does not possess only the great sword techniques, but also excellent movements. In addition to that, there’re also a magic absorbing sword and another artificial demon’s

weapon in the shape of a tube that emits a flash in the report.” [King Darts]

“Yes. They are all the truth.....May I know if there is anything wrong in respect to that?” [Cecilia]

“I couldn’t really grasp the part.....about how Mirror fell into the river. It doesn’t sound reasonable even if Cecilia Aquarain is a member from the hero’s party who had defeated the Demon Lord. Among those two over there, we have received hidden reports that a guy by the name of Youki has registered with the guild as a rank C adventurer but, the other young boy wasn’t registered with the guild. Besides.....” [King Darts]

When he casted his glance at Sheik.....he’s still sleeping!?

It’s certainly inevitable even if we were suspected now. Cecilia could be seen breaking out in a cold sweat as well.

She was probably figuring out how to worm our way out of this. I did ask him not to say anything unnecessary but I don’t recall giving him the green light to doze off.

“.....Sheik, wake up.” [Youki]

“Nn?” [Sheik]

I nudged Sheik with my elbow, to wake him up.

“Do something. Anything.” [Youki]

Would performing just acrobatic movements be convincing enough for him? However, King Darts appeared to have a different proposal in mind as he observed Sheik.

“I would like to have a better understanding of your ability....How about if you were to be Sylvia’s practice partner here?” [King Darts]

Sylvia should be the female knight beside him.....It should be alright if it does not reach the degree where injuries occur.

“Sure~” [Sheik]

“.....then, here I go.” [Sylvia]

Upon hearing Sheik’s reply, the unexpected expression she had on when she was flirting with the King was gone, replaced by a penetrating glare that was cast at Sheik as she approached him.

Despite the supposedly heavy armour weighing on her body, the female knight’s movement was extremely agile. But, Sheik is not any inferior to her too. They were engaged in close combat for a short moment before the female knight parted and backed away a few steps, returning to her former position.

Sheik had not gone in pursuit as well and did a light stretching instead. It seems to be over.

“Sylvia, how is his ability?” [King Darts]

“Yes. His swift movement is of one unbefitting of his age. I am looking forward to seeing his growth in future.” [Sylvia]

Judging on the contents of the conversation, it looks like they have recognized Sheik’s ability.

“King Darts, then..?” [Cecilia]

“Aa, I’ll believe in your story for the time being.” [King Darts]

“Thank you very much.” [Cecilia]

Seeing Cecilia giving a splendidly done and beautiful bow, I lowered my head before the King too. Casting Cecilia a sidelong glance, I could see her looking relieved. The reason being, she might be the one feeling most anxious about the whole ordeal this time. I’m glad that it is a tremendous weight off her shoulders now.

“Hahaha. Just raise your heads! I would’ve believe in your story even if I had not tested his abilities actually. The testimonies received have already proven that what’s stated in the report is not a lie.” [King Darts]

“.....Eh?” [Cecilia]

What do you mean by that? Cecilia looked totally bewildered by that statement. I looked at King Darts with two huge dots in my eyes too.

“Based on the information acquired from Raven, the villagers have already

testified hearing loud battle noises coming from the forests. Raven had gone to the scene himself and confirmed the traces of the fight there as well.” [King Darts]

“But, those alone might not be sufficient as a testimony to our report.....”
[Cecilia]

“Hmmm. First of all, there would no reason for Cecilia Aquarain to be giving a false report. It will be sufficient so long as you were to prove that a battle did ensue there.” [King Darts]

Could it be because she’s a member from the hero’s party? The King appears to have considerable trust in her.

“Also pertaining to the results of the fight....from what I have heard so far about Gallis Empire’s hero, Mirror, well if you had lost then you wouldn’t be standing here right now, would you?” [King Darts]

“I had to undergo medical treatment in the village at that time...in worst cases there is a possibility of me getting killed too.” [Cecilia]

“Hahaha. So it seems.” [King Darts]

In other words, could it be that, King Darts has not doubted us at all from the beginning? Cecilia who was at her wits’ end, trying to think of various excuses since earlier started trembling.

“King Darts!” [Cecilia]

“Hahaha. Don’t be so angry, Cecilia Aquarain. It was just a little prank.” [King Darts]

As expected of Cecilia. Despite the fact that the other party’s a King, she still snapped at him. King Darts laughed in an effort to gloss over Cecilia’s anger. I am seriously worried about the future of this country.

Was everything that I have heard about the King just a rumour? Just as that thought crossed my mind, King Darts who was appeasing Cecilia earlier voiced out.

“Fuu...well then. Without further ado, let’s enter the main topic. You have attained quite numerous achievements this time. Not only have you repelled Gallis Empire’s hero, Mirror, you have also relayed it to us on the enemy’s hidden intelligences gathering agenda on Clariness Kingdom and also gathered other valuable information beneficial to the country. So, I would like to grant each of you an award. What do you want?” [King Darts]

An award..... What a sweet sounding word this is. But, a reward might sound even better. Without knowing it, my mind ended up changing the word ‘award’ into ‘reward’. The word ‘reward’ endlessly repeats itself in my head.

Reward, reward, reward, reward... that’s it!

“I want to go out with Cecilia.” [Youki]

Due to the honest desire swirling in my head, I wound up blurting it out by accident.

I was overcome with remorse the moment those words escaped my mouth.

This isn't a reward that can be granted by the King, is it!?

Sheik burst out laughing while Cecilia was stunned by my words.

Everyone in the room, including King Darts appeared stupefied by my sudden unexpected request.



1. 自分の首を絞めることになりかねませんからね = It's a metaphor for 'An action that will end up putting oneself into an extremely dangerous situation'.
Literally, 'strangling your own neck'. The English version would be 'Put one's head in a noose'.

Chapter 20: I made the girl I like angry

“You bastard! How dare you treat it as a joke after, His Majesty went through the effort to grant you an award!” [Sylvia]

“Hii—!?” [Youki]

The female knight who was furious grabbed the hilt of her sword.

What should I do in this situation!? This might be the consequence of the manifestation of my own desire. Could someone help me do something about it!?

I looked at the two people next to me; however, Sheik was still roaring with laughter while Cecilia seemed to be holding her head in deep thought..... No help seemed to come in time. What should I do?

“Hahahaha.” [King Darts]

At that moment, King Darts suddenly started laughing loudly. Sounds of his laughter reverberated through the audience room. He was laughing even more than Sheik.

“K-King Darts, is there anything wrong?”

The person who appeared to be the minister voiced his concern. He seemed

to be the one with the most common sense among the people here, so until Cecilia recovers, I have no choice but to rely on him.

“Don’t you think that it’s really interesting, Clyde? He is very similar to me.”
[King Darts]

“Having a single person like King Darts was more than adequate.....Haah....you don’t even understand what I had to go through.” [Clyde]

.....That minister must have been through a lot. I felt sorry for him.

Although, judging from their conversation alone, it didn’t appear as if he hated King Darts. Or rather, if you have the time to be chatting leisurely, please do something about that female knight. She’s on the verge of slashing me at any moment now!

I wasn’t sure if my wish has finally reached someone but, King Darts finally grabbed the female knight’s arm and pulled her towards him.

“Sylvia, why don’t you calm down for the time being?” [King Darts]

He whispered softly into her ear.

Rather than bearing the appearance of a King, he resembles more of a detestable skirt-chaser who was deceiving a woman.

However, at those words, the female knight blushed and released her grip from the hilt. A sweet pink aura could be seen enveloping them once again.

I wonder.....the sight before me now is comparable to the scenes usually

found in Shoujo manga.

Though, I'm saved thanks to King Darts.....Just as I was feeling relieved, I felt someone tapping my shoulder so I turned to the side.

There stood Cecilia who was wearing the same deadpan expression similar to Sophia-san. Un....it didn't seem as if I was saved after all.

“.....Youki-san? You do understand what I want to say now, don't you?”
[Cecilia]

I do recall something similar happening in Dagaz Village as well but, her anger level now far exceeded that time.

“Cecilia's expressionless look is also cute” That is something that I wouldn't be able to say right now, because of how angry Cecilia looks at present.

Gogogogogo In the midst of this threatening atmosphere, the sound of air reverberating in the room seemed to be audible even to my ears. By the looks of it, even someone who possessed a cheat like me might die.....

“E-Erm...Aquarain-san, please calm down.....I don't think he means any harm actually.” [Clyde]

Minister Clyde-san, my saviour! Someone like him who has gone through so much hardship due to King Darts must have accustomed himself to something like this by now. He might be able to do something about it.

But I soon realized that it was foolish of me. It was just a futile hope to grasp at straws.

“.....I’m feeling quite calm now? Clyde-san, please don’t say such strange things.” [Cecilia]

Cecilia replied him back in the same deadpan manner. Clyde-san’s face immediately turned pale at that sight. At that moment, I finally realized it. Relying on this person is no longer possible.

“T-True. That was a needless concern, wasn’t it? Aquarain-san.” [Clyde]

Far from appeasing Cecilia, he was only able to buy some time. He returned to his position beside the throne after his failed attempt.....My life is not spared after all.

“Cecilia Aquarain, just let it go. He didn’t mean any harm actually.” [King Darts]

When did he separate from the female knight? Before I knew it, King Darts began defending me. In this instance, I don’t care who my saviour is anymore. Even if that person happened to be that perverted foolish King.

“.....I understand, King Darts” [Cecilia]

Cecilia answered after she pondered for a moment.

Even if it’s rotten, it’s still sea bream. 1 Even if he was flirting with the female knight in the middle of an audience, he is still a King. Cecilia might have come to an assumption that it would be unwise to cause anymore commotion in the

presence of everyone in the room.

“.....Please prepare yourself once we go back.” [Cecilia]

She whispered into my ear.....As I thought, I might not survive through this.

While I was trembling at the thoughts of the sermons that would be awaiting me once I returned, King Darts started laughing again.

“Hahaha. I don’t think I’ll get bored looking at the both of you.....By the way, with regard to the award that I was talking about earlier.” [King Darts]

“No, it’s fine. Please forget about it. It was just a figure of speech. I was possibly too nervous since it was my first time having an audience with a King.....In addition to that, I might have been too ecstatic after hearing that we would be granted with an award.....” [Youki]

I could sense a strong tension emanating from the person beside me. The situation would get ugly if I do not try changing the subject as soon as I can.

Damn you, Sheik! He started laughing even more after looking at me. Wasn’t this guy being most disrespectful at the moment? Despite that, why did the female knight warn me and not..... And why was she gazing intently at King Darts now!?

The knights present remained standing upright, appearing indifferent about the scene before their eyes. They might have thought that it would get troublesome if they got dragged into this. Could you guys do your job!

“Seriously, I didn’t realize that there is such an interesting person like you in my country. If I had met Youki earlier, I might’ve placed you in the Hero’s party.....” [King Darts]

“Nono, you’re overestimating me, King Darts.” [Youki]

An idiotic Hero with an ill-natured magician. It would still be impossible even if Cecilia and Raven were around. Despite the fact that Cecilia might be the only person playing as the ‘straight man’ among them, it would still greatly imbalance the party if I were to join them.

Well, it was only a ‘what if’ story.

“Hahaha, I wasn’t overestimating you in particular. If it’s Youki then you should be able reach A-rank very soon in the guild.” [King Darts]

How was he able to come to that conclusion just from our conversation? I have neither been tested through a spar like Sheik nor have I showed him any magic..... I strongly hope that this annoying guy hasn’t taken a liking to me all of a sudden.

“Hey Captain~ What’s the award~?” [Sheik]

Had the conversation gone well, my effort to switch the subject would’ve been successful. In spite of that, Sheik led the conversation back to its prior subject.

“Nn? That’s right. We were talking about awards earlier. Then first of all regarding Youki’s award.....As you might have expected, if we do not have the consent from Aquarain herself, it would be impossible.” [King Darts]

The sight of King Darts lowering his head with an apologetic look on his face greatly stimulated my guilt. What he said was sound since I was the one at fault so, it was really hard to me.....mentally when he apologized. Much less I would be having another long lecture waiting for me once I returned.

“Is there anything that Cecilia Aquarain wants?” [King Darts]

King Darts shifted his attention from me who was looking dispirited to Cecilia.

“No, I was only fulfilling my duty as a citizen staying in Clariness Kingdom.....”
[Cecilia]

“As expected of the one from the Hero’s party. However the main reason of the visit to Dagaz Village was for the villagers’ treatment and the subjugation of the bandits. The fight with Gallis Empire’s Hero was not included among the requests so you do not need to mind it too much.” [King Darts]

“Even if the encounter with Mirror was by chance, I do not intend to receive any award for this.” [Cecilia]

“Hmm....if you really don’t need one then it wouldn’t be good to force you into it anymore. Even so, has the Hero’s party already lived on as only a legend of Clariness’ Kingdom now?” [King Darts]

“That’s because, everyone has returned to their respective life after the Demon Lord was defeated....” [Cecilia]

Based on what I have heard from Cecilia, Yuuga seemed to have established diplomatic relationship and subjugated an A-rank demon. Mikana is working at the royal palace as a magician and has secured a considerably good position there. Raven is currently leading the group of knights from the castle while Cecilia has to visit various towns and villages in various places to cure the people as a cleric.

Certainly the party has disbanded and each of the members began living their own life now. However, Yuuga is in love with Cecilia while Mikana is in love with Yuuga. In my opinion, the Hero’s party is still going strong now.

“.....The world might not be truly peaceful yet though.....the conversation was derailed. Boy, what kind of award do you want?” [King Darts]

So Sheik’s the last one. I beg of you. Please don’t ask for something strange.....Although, I’m in no position to say this about someone now. It’ll basically be the same as the pot calling the kettle black. I just waited patiently for Sheik’s reply.

“.....I’m sleepy so I want to go home~” [Sheik]

“””” ””””

Sheik let out a huge yawn and rubbed his eyes as he stretched. This guy is seriously too carefree. All of us became silent at Sheik’s words.

“Hahaha...is that so. So you’re sleepy. Then it can’t be help. Let’s end the audience here today.” [King Darts]

The one who broke the silence was King Darts. It seemed that the audience today has come to an end. Nice, Sheik! It ended without any issue. I'm seriously glad. It was indeed just as I had planned.....

"Then let's go home, Sheik-kun.....Youki-san too." [Cecilia]

"Yes~" [Sheik]

"A-Aaa....." [Youki]

However, I became depressed the moment I recalled the blunder that I made.

"Come again if you have the time." [King Darts]

King Darts said before we left the audience room. To be honest I don't think I ever want to drop by here anymore. This incident has become a trauma for me.

On our trip back in the carriage, Sheik started fooling around again and climbed atop my head. Nevertheless, I didn't have the composure to retort back at him.

The carriage was drowned in silence from beginning to end. Cecilia remained expressionless while I hung my head down, trembling in fear.

"Boring~" Sheik grumbled after taking a look at the both of us. Despite that, we had not spoken a single word so Sheik ended up falling asleep. The carriage which was enveloped in the worst atmosphere then arrived at Aquarain's residence.

Sheik was led to the guest room so he could take his nap.

I was the only one guided to Cecilia's room. Thus my one to one sermon began. Aa, I'm seriously stupid.

I wound up alone in the room with the girl I like. A normal young boy would think that this is a heart throbbing, irresistible situation. However, it was a different case for me. Certainly my heart is beating really fast now but, it wasn't the bittersweet throb that came after experiencing the springtime of my life. Seized by fear of what might befall me, my heart pounded rapidly.

".....Youki-san. Do you have anything that you would like to say?" [Cecilia]

Cecilia was looking at me dauntingly as I sat myself in seiza on the floor.

It had inevitably turned into this situation as soon as we entered the room. When Cecilia saw me in such a state, she gave me a cold gaze and voiced out with anger enveloping in her words.

"Yes, I'm very sorry!!" [Youki]

I lowered my head immediately and prostrated before her. I had not expected to be forgiven with that but, I should display my sincerity at the very least when I apologize. As I kept my head lowered, I stole a glance at her look. Nonetheless, her expression remained the same as earlier.

"Why did you apologize all of the sudden? Were you aware that you have

done something wrong?” [Cecilia]

This was the response given after I prostrated. It would appear that it was necessary for me to confess the sin that I had committed. I raised my head and professed the mistake made in the audience room.

“I had confessed in the middle of the audience.....” [Youki]

“So you are aware of it. Then why do you think that it was something bad?”
[Cecilia]

“Erm....it was thoughtless of me....I think.” [Youki]

“Yes it was thoughtless..... It wasn’t that I hated Youki-san or anything.”
[Cecilia]

Thank goodness. It didn’t seem that she disliked me. Of course, it still didn’t change the fact that she was still pretty angry.

“If you think that it was.....thoughtless to divulge your feelings in front of everyone then, at that time why did you....” [Cecilia]

“I might have not considered it...” [Youki]

She placed her hand on her forehead head as if she was saying, ‘Good grief’. I couldn’t read into her expression anymore since her face was hidden now but, I think I caught a glimpse of tears somehow.....no, that was possibly just my imagination.

“Didn’t it ever occur to you that it was strange before you said it out loud?”
[Cecilia]

There were only greed and the sweet sounding word of reward swirling in my head at that time. Although, if I were to say that, the length of the sermon would increase so that is something that I definitely can’t say.

“.....it did cross my mind for an instant but, the words came out unintentionally.” [Youki]

“Unintentionally?!” [Cecilia]

Damn. I picked the wrong choice of words. Cecilia repeated what I had said with a look of astonishment.

“.....Youki-san. Let’s have a chat for a little longer.” [Cecilia]

“.....Yes.” [Youki]

I could only nod in agreement in the face of her wrath when I saw the veins popping out on her forehead.

Cecilia’s sermon lasted for about thirty minutes in my present state. As I was fighting against the growing numbness of my feet, I heard the sound of someone knocking at the door.

“Cecilia, have you returned?”

I could tell that it was Celia-san on the other side of the door from the voice. Celia-san opened the door and entered when Cecilia replied her “Yes” in a cold tone.

“If you have returned you should at least tell.....what kind of situation is this?” [Celia]

“I’m in the middle of preaching to Youki-san.” [Cecilia]

“Ara...did something happen?” [Celia]

Cecilia explained the circumstances to Celia-san. In the meantime, I hung my head down as I remained in seiza, bracing myself to receive the reproof from both the mother and child next.

“That was Youki-kun’s fault, wasn’t it?” [Celia]

After the explanation was done, the sermon resumed once again, with Celia-san joining in as well.

“Cecilia is a girl, you know? Things such as atmosphere and the like are important even if you want to make a confession.” [Celia]

Eh? So it’s that kind of discussion?

“Erm, Okaa-sama....that wasn’t really the reason why I was angry....” [Cecilia]

“It’s good so just be quiet, Cecilia! It’s alright since Okaa-sama understands it.” [Celia]

I don’t think she understood it though. After silencing Cecilia, Celia-san sat herself in seiza with her legs folded primly under her. She aligned her sights with mine and tapped my shoulder.

“Youki-kun, in my opinion, atmosphere and the right opportunity are really important when it comes to making a confession.” [Celia]

“H-Haa.” [Youki]

“Confessing in a place with so many people like the audience room with such a bad ambience will be a demerit. If that’s the case, Cecilia wouldn’t be able to give you a positive response, would she?!” [Celia]

“Y-Yes. It is just as you said.” [Youki]

It was my fault for conducting things as I like, treating Cecilia as if she was totally unrelated to it. All I could do was just nod in response to Celia-san’s overwhelming vigour.

“Seriously. At this rate, Cecilia will be stolen by another guy. Do you understand it!? Is Youki-kun fine with that!?” [Celia]

“I don’t want that!” [Youki]

Cecilia and another guy’s wedding.....Just thinking about it made me cry tears

of blood. If that were to happen, I might attack that man in my demon form.....

“Are you thinking of something scary currently? Are you possibly attacking the person whom Cecilia is dating in your mind?” [Celia]

“How did you know that!?” [Youki]

“Ufufu.....don’t look down on an adult. Although, I think having such thought is a good thing as well.” [Celia]

“Okaa-sama, that isn’t a good thing.....” [Cecilia]

Cecilia who has been in silence since just now voiced her opinion. Despite my thoughts earlier, I was actually of the same opinion with her.

“Ara, what is so bad about it? Isn’t that a proof of just how much you are loved?” [Celia]

“”!”” [Cecilia & Youki]

At Celia-san’s words, Cecilia and I looked at her, googly-eyed.

Is such a way of loving someone acceptable? In spite of my old mental age due to my reincarnation, my experience in love is still close to non-existent. Hence, that is something that I wouldn’t be able to understand.

“I guess the conversation on love might still be too early for the both of you.

However, it is something that you need to know in future too so it would be good for you to study about it a little.” [Celia]

“.....that kind of love might a little too heavy, isn’t it?” [Cecilia]

“Certainly.....” [Youki]

I agreed when Cecilia prompted for my opinion.

“.....Youki-san, would be fine right?” [Cecilia]

“Nono, are you doubting me?” [Youki]

I have no interest in being a yandere though.

“But, when you were speaking to Okaa-sama a while ago, you were having that delusion.....” [Cecilia]

“No, that was from a while ago, so I mean....” [Youki]

Celia-san chuckled when she saw the exchange between us. What is so amusing?

“Okaa-sama.....is there anything wrong?” [Cecilia]

“Celia-san, what are you laughing about.....” [Youki]

giggle “That’s because, the both of you were just in the middle of a sermon a while ago but you have already reconciled.” [Celia]

“”Aaa-...”” [Cecilia & Youki]

She was really furious just now but, without realizing it, we started speaking to each other normally again.

Cecilia tilted her head in wonder, looking puzzled as to why she started speaking to me as usual again as well.

(The two of them seem to have really good compatibility. Could the relationship be stagnant due to Youki-kun’s idle mind and Cecilia’s serious nature? No, I guess Youki-kun’s the one at fault this time.) 2

Cecilia and I were in a fluster, having no idea of what Celia-san was thinking of at that time.

“Alright, alright, could both of you please calm down?.....Can we just conclude the case this time seeing that Youki-kun and Cecilia are already on good terms?” [Celia]

Would it be fine to end it with that? I would be thankful for it but, what about Cecilia? Judging by her expression she didn’t seem to be convinced by it. However, her expression seemed gentler than earlier so her anger must have somewhat dissipated by now.

“.....Only for this time, alright?” [Cecilia]

“T-Thank you. I’ll think of the time and place before I do something the next time.” [Youki]

Cecilia seemed to have let it slide only this time as well. Come to think of it, Celia-san might have joined in the conversation so that Cecilia and I could reconcile too.

Celia-san gave me a wink when I looked at her.

“It’s good that the two of you have reconciled.” This might be what she was trying to convey. No, that must be it.

Jumping to my own conclusion, I breathed out in relief. “Aa—” My voice reverberated through the room.

“However, Youki-kun should indeed reflect on the incident this time a little. Youki-kun, starting from today, you’re not allowed to meet Cecilia for one month. It would be good for you to study slightly more about girls.” [Celia]

“Eh?!” [Youki]

I have not expected myself to fall all the way from heaven to hell. It shouldn’t be one month right? It’s one month!

“C-Celia-san. Could you at least make it half month?” [Youki]

“No.” [Celia]

“Could you somehow make it half month, please!” [Youki]

It will be my second time prostrating today. If I could meet up with the person whom I like, I could prostrate as many times as she wants. My earnest feelings wouldn't be transmitted to her if I don't do at least this much.

“Ano.....Okaa-sama? Youki-san has already reflected on himself so there is no need to go that far.....” [Cecilia]

“Ara, is Cecilia too impatient to wait for the entire month to see Youki-kun as well?” [Celia]

“Erm...well that is....” [Cecilia]

She fidgeted cutely. Uwa, it's a rare sight to see Cecilia behaving like this. I shall relish it and burn this image into my mind.

“Ufufu, then half month is fine. In exchange, I would like you to adopt a firm attitude the next time you see Cecilia.” [Celia]

“A firm attitude....?” [Youki]

I don't get it. What does she mean?

“You'll understand it once you take your time to think about it. Then it's time to adjourn this. Is Sophia around?” [Celia]

“Did you call for me, Madam?” [Sophia]

The moment Celia-san clapped her hands, Sophia-san appeared within less than 10 seconds. It was something that just crossed my mind but, she must have possessed a skill that is no different than a ninja.

“No, this is just the result of a maid’s experience.” [Sophia]

“Mind reading?!” [Youki]

“Those words have slipped out of your mouth. May I know your request, Madam?” [Sophia]

“I think it’s almost time for Youki-kun to go back now so could you guide him to the gate?” [Celia]

“I understand. Then Youki-sama, this way please.” [Sophia]

‘Guiding’ me was just a ‘cover-up’. I understand it well that she was forcing me to leave. Sophia-san grabbed me by the scruff of my neck and dragged me away with all her might. Isn’t this method of guiding someone strange? Although, seeing that my situation would remain the same even if I were to say something about it, I shut my mouth.

“Also, I will be looking after Sheik-kun here for the time being, alright?” [Celia]

The kidnapper-like tone has been corrected but, it has not changed the fact that she was still doing the same thing. Well, it’s fine anyway since it saved me

the trouble. I must have a nerves of steel. All those thoughts were actually going through my brain even though I was being dragged off the residence.

“Youki-san, let’s meet again.” [Cecilia]

I returned the wave when Cecilia waved at me.

As what Celia-san has said, it would be good if I could ‘adopt a firm attitude’ the next time I see Cecilia. When my sight met with hers, she sent me off with her usual gentle smile.

.....Um, I will definitely not fail.

As I thought, Cecilia is cute. I will not give up.

I will work on the task given by Celia-san and find an answer to it without a doubt.

Then, after I have reconciled with her and increased my guild rank.....I will confess to her once again.

Rinkage’s Footnotes

1. 腐っても鯛 = “Something that is not what it once was but it is still high class.”

2. This monologue belongs to Celia.

Extra: I went to the sea

“Seriously!? So you managed to take a day off?” [Youki]

“Yes. I have been working hard recently..... Also, Okaa-sama seemed to have pulled some strings behind to make it possible.” [Cecilia]

“Alright—!!!” [Youki]

I made a guts pose as my cries of delight echoed through Cecilia’s room.

What kind of situation is this? It was decided that we would be taking a trip to the sea for 5 days and 4 nights! Of course, the purpose of the trip wasn’t for fun but for a guild request.

I originally received the invitation from Raven but, after much persuasion, along with a mixture of an unreasonable demand, I finally received to permission to bring Cecilia along. Since the outing to the sea would take 5 days and 4 nights, I wasn’t sure if Cecilia was able to fit the trip into her schedule. Nevertheless, it seemed that she was able to make it somehow in the end.

Considering that we need to stay over for several nights, it is quite a troublesome request.

In order to relay this news immediately, I made my way immediately to the knight’s headquarter where Raven was, skipping along the way.

“Raven, hear this. It’s about the request but, Cecilia will able to participate as well! She could arrange for the preparation of the carriage too.” [Youki]

“Eh? Cecilia!?”

“...Ge-!” [Youki]

Shit. As I was over the moon, I ended up committing a blunder by entering the room without first knocking and stating my business.

Even though it was supposed to be Raven’s workplace, Raven was not the only one inside. Yuuga was present there too for some reason.

“What do you mean by that? Cecilia would be participating too!? Are you all planning to go somewhere?” [Yuuga]

“No, well.....” [Youki]

I turned my gaze to Raven, silently pleading with him for help. However, all he did was just shake his head, as though telling me indirectly that I should just give up on it. Certainly this was due to my own mistake but, I shouldn’t give up that easily.

“You did say that the carriage will be arranged too, didn’t you? So you guys are going somewhere, right!?” [Yuuga]

Yuuga kept pressing on without hesitation. He was being quite noisy there. Nevertheless, if I were to back down right now this guy will definitely come along with us. If that’s the case, then my plan to have fun once the request is over will be ruined.

Request....that’s right! Request!

“I-I’m sorry but, we’ll be going to the sea for a request. We’re not really going there to have fun or.....” [Youki]

“You’re even going to the sea!?” [Yuuga]

Yuuga’s eyes sparkled. Shit, I have blurted out something unnecessary.

“I mean, we are going to the sea but we’re not going there to have fun....” [Youki]

“Sea....sea is it. Alright, if Cecilia is going then I’ll go too! I’ll adjust my schedule immediately.” [Yuuga]

“Aa, wa-wait, wait.....!” [Youki]

Yuuga dashed out of the room before I could even do anything. The only ones remaining in the room were, me, whose hand was still outstretched to door and, Raven who was heaving a small sigh.

“.....Once Yuuga goes into that state, no one can stop him anymore.” [Raven]

“It’s a lie, isn’t it—!??” [Youki]

“.....It’s your fault for blurting out something important as soon as you came in.” [Raven]

Raven tapped my shoulder, telling me to give up. I wonder where my sense of euphoria earlier has disappeared to. I am currently overwhelmed with only sense of regret and despair.

“Damn. Even though it was a long awaited trip to the sea.” [Youki]

“.....Youki, have you forgotten about the contents of the request? You might be able to complete it faster if Yuuga is around. If that happens then Youki will have much longer time to enjoy by the sea.” [Raven]

“The moment that guy comes into the picture, it’s already over!” [Youki]

Yuuga also likes Cecilia. If he ever notices me and Cecilia alone, he will definitely come in between us.

“.....When that happens, I will try my best to assist you.” [Raven]

“Really? As expected of Raven!” [Youki]

“.....If I don’t have anything else to do once the request is over, that is. I’ll keep Yuuga occupied.” [Raven]

He began taking out pen and papers from the desk as preparation. It would be troublesome to entertain Yuuga even through writing. Despite that, he was still doing all these. However, I will not give up on the chance to have fun with Cecilia by the sea as well. I should just accept Raven’s kindness obediently here.

“I’m sorry. I’ll be counting on you then.” [Youki]

“.....Leave it to me.” [Raven]

Thus, thanks to the help of a trustworthy friend, I now have a plan to stop Yuuga. However, this was just the beginning of my trouble with Yuuga’s participation.

“Hah?” [Youki]

It was the day after I had spoken to Raven. I was invited out by my three former subordinates for a meal together.

“That’s what I said. We will be coming along with Captain. You’ll be going to the sea, am I right?” [Duke]

“.....First.” [Happiness]

“I’m looking forward to it now~” [Sheik]

What they had wanted to say kept me wondering but, I have never expected them to come up with that declaration. Not only Yuuga yesterday but, them too? What on earth is happening?

“Or rather, from whom did you hear that from? The news about me going to the sea, that is.” [Youki]

“Raven was being unusually restless so I interrogated him.” [Duke]

“Raven.....” [Youki]

Why did you have to disclose it to this troublesome fully armoured guy?
Haven't you already witnessed the outcome after I blabbed it out by accident yesterday?

“Of course he tried evading the question at first. So I had to use my trump card.” [Duke]

“Trump card?” [Youki]

Duke shifted his gaze to Happiness. Although, the person herself seemed clueless about what's happening.

“Could it be that....” [Youki]

“Fufufu.....well that's how it is.” [Duke]

“RAVEN!!” [Youki]

I faced the sky and shouted the name of the friend who had fallen into the honey trap out loud.

“.....What?” [Happiness]

Happiness tilted her head in wonder, not knowing what was going on. She

might have done what Duke had told her to do without understanding anything herself.

“Captain, you should share the fun around. Aren’t we good friends?” [Duke]

“...Un.” [Happiness]

“I want to have fun too~” [Sheik]

“Ugu.....” [Youki]

I was being backed into a corner by the three of them more and more. It was already beyond my control the moment those three joined forces. At this rate, it would be pointless to even go on.

“Captain.” [Duke]

“.....Captain.” [Happiness]

“Captain~” [Sheik]

“Ahh, I got it. If you want to come along then just do as you like!” [Youki]

I was the one who was defeated in the end. It was already decided that the three of them will be participating as well.

“We did it~” [Sheik]

Sheik started bouncing around in high spirits, probably because he was allowed to take part in it. I hope he hasn't misunderstood that the main purpose of the trip. We are not going there for leisure.

"Oi, let me just inform you guys beforehand that we're not going there to have fun. It's for a request...." [Youki]

"Let's prepare immediately. Let's go, Happiness, Sheik." [Duke]

".....Of course." [Happiness]

"...Yay." [Sheik]

The three of them ran off before I could finish with what I was saying. You guys are deserting me after calling me out?

"We have yet to discuss about the request though. Well, Duke should be able to grasp the situation. Probably." [Youki]

He did say that he interrogated Raven so he must have been informed of the contents of the request too.

"Well, the three of them hardly had any opportunity to leave the demon's castle because of me. I guess it couldn't be helped that this had put them all in a vacation mood." [Youki]

Considering the contents of the request, the more people participating, the

faster it would be accomplished. As long as I do something about Yuuga somehow, I would be able to have a date with Cecilia by the sea after that. I was thinking of such things optimistically.

Several days later, in order to explain the reason why the number of participants have increased due to Raven, I went to the Aquarains' residence.

“Umm, should I explain it honestly? No, if I were to think about it, Happiness should have told Cecilia by now. So there is no need for me to ponder about it so seriously.” [Youki]

I muttered to myself as I walked along the corridor. Upon reaching Cecilia's room, I heard voices coming from inside. It seemed that someone else is here. Just as I was thinking of so, the door flew open and the witch, Mikana dashed out of the room.

“A-Anyway, I-I'll be going too. Got it, Cleric!?” [Mikana]

Mikana ran off without even taking notice of my presence. What she said before she left made me really curious.....

As soon as I entered the half-open door, I found Cecilia with a worn out face standing there.

“I'm sorry for bothering you but.....the one who just dashed out of the room was...” [Youki]

“.....It was Mikana-san. She seemed to have sense something from Hero-sama who was preparing for the trip.” [Cecilia]

“Her intuition as his childhood friend can be scary.” [Youki]

Could it possibly be the power of her love? One should not make light of the power of a woman in love.

“No, it seemed that she happened upon Hero-sama when he was in the middle of choosing a swimwear. And, when Mikana-san suddenly paid a visit, I was also in the midst of packing.....” [Cecilia]

“So when she noticed swimsuit among the clothes in Cecilia’s luggage, she became suspicious.....?” [Youki]

“...Yes. After that, it ended up becoming a situation whereby nothing can be concealed anymore.” [Cecilia]

Cecilia lowered her head apologetically. There was no need for her to apologize though. I was the one who responsible in the matter with regard to Yuuga in the first place. Anyway, I should first ask her to raise her head so I could relay the things about Duke and the rest to her.

“.....I see. So Duke-san and the rest too.” [Cecilia]

“The number of participants have increased more than the initial plan but..... well, we might be able to complete our request sooner than expected too....” [Youki]

“I don’t mind it but, do the rest of the people know about the request?” [Cecilia]

“.....Duke and the rest should know about it.” [Youki]

“Then I shall confirm it with Hero-sama.” [Cecilia]

“I understand. I’ll leave it to you.” [Youki]

I was treated to tea after that, and we had a light, pleasant conversation before I returned to the inn.

Seeing that I am almost done with my packing, I reported to Tiel-chan so she could come over. This is so Gai would not feel lonely when we are away for the request.

“Brat, you are totally ridiculing me, aren’t you!?” [Gai]

“No well~ It was just in case anything happens, you know? Since I have already requested for the permission from the innkeeper and was handed the duplicated key too.” [Youki]

“You’re doing something unnecessary....” [Gai]

His face grew angrier. The look on his face now is not something that can be shown to Tiel-chan. Hence, using Earth magic, I altered just Gai’s face, shaping it into something that doesn’t look scary.

“Brat, you’re changing my appearance again aren’t you?! What have you made me into this time.....?” [Gai]

“You can rest assured. It will be alright this time.” [Youki]

What I have improvised it into, is the knight painting that was displayed in the Knight’s Headquarter. According to Raven, that individual was the leader of the knights, and also a prominent looking figure who has created many legends from several generations ago. Not only was he strong, he possessed good looks that could captivate even men. Nevertheless, that painting is the only thing that is left of that distinguished figure now.

Well, I do think he looks cool from the painting but I was certainly not captivated by him. The reason being was obvious since I don’t swing that way from the start. Anyway, thereupon, Gai is now the owner of the coolest looking face. Tiel-chan should be glad with it too.

My pack up came to an end while I was doing such foolish things.

Thus a few days passed after that, and it was finally the appointed day for the trip to the sea but.....

“.....Wait, why are the three of us the only ones gathered here?” [Youki]

The only ones assembled at Aquarain’s residence, the supposedly scheduled rendezvous location, were only me, Raven and Cecilia. Of course, the appointed meeting time has long passed.

“Cecilia, isn’t Happiness currently working as a live-in maid in your house? Also, Sheik was supposed to have been abducted by Celia-san too.” [Youki]

“Youki-san, please don’t label my mother as a kidnapper on your own accord.....Based on what I have confirmed with Sophia-san, both of them have left after Duke-san came over last night to pick them up.” [Cecilia]

“I see.....So where is Duke then?” [Youki]

I turned my attention to Raven but he shook his head while showing me a memo. What written in the memo is, 『The head of the knight’s dorm witnessed him going out late at night. 』

“Those guys. They must have gone there ahead of us.” [Youki]

“I wonder why. I have already arranged the carriage for all of us though.” [Cecilia]

“They are probably trying to surprise us by arriving before us.” [Youki]

It was easy for me to read their thoughts seeing that I’ve known them for so long.

“Then, what about Hero-sama and Mikana-san.....” [Cecilia]

“My apologies for interrupting your conversation, but there is a letter for Ojou-sama from Yuuga-sama and Mikana-sama.” [Sophia]

Sophia-san appeared with a letter from the two of them all of a sudden when Cecilia raised a query. Cecilia quickly confirmed the contents of the letter.

“.....It seems that, possibly because the two of them have recklessly made changes to their schedule, they have to head straight to their workplace.”
[Cecilia]

“I see. So there will be no one coming even if we were to continue waiting here then.” [Youki]

“That pretty much sums it up.” [Cecilia]

“Then let us depart. It would be bad to keep Duke and the rest waiting for too long.” [Youki]

“True. Shall we go then?” [Cecilia]

『...Understood』 was what Raven wrote in the memo before going into the carriage. I don't think a memo was needed for that actually.

“Have a safe trip, all of you.” [Sophia]

We began our journey to our destination after Sophia-san saw us off.

After leaving Aquarain's residence and being swayed from side to side in the carriage, we arrived at our destination in what seemed like a blink of an eye.

We were supposed to meet up with Yuuga and the gang in front of the seaside cottage, but.....

“Hold it! What the heck is this?!” [Mikana]

Mikana appeared to be extremely angry. No, it wasn't just Mikana. Happiness and Sheik seemed disappointed, and Duke was just staring off into space. Yuuga was the sole person who looked happy, owing to Cecilia's presence.

"Even if you were to ask me that.....It is actually our job to do something about it as our request." [Youki]

I replied to Mikana after looking around.

The sea is in high tide and a heavy storm is blowing. At such a time, a resort like this should be crowded with people, but....there wasn't a single soul in sight. We were the only ones here.

"How are we supposed to solve something like this!?" [Mikana]

"Mikana-san, please calm down a little." [Cecilia]

"Uu....." [Mikana]

Mikana instantly became quiet after Cecilia soothed her. I wasn't sure of the reason but, it seemed convenient at a time like this. I can go through the contents of the request now.

"Listen up. Just as what I have said earlier, the purpose of this request is to do something about this situation. According to the employees from the seaside cottage, this doesn't seem to be a natural calamity." [Youki]

“Then, could this be the working of a demon?”

“Yes, that seems probable. That’s why, if we don’t do something about the present situation we will not be able to have fun on the beach.” [Youki]

“.....First hearing it.” [Happiness]

Happiness looked at me, conveying her complaints indirectly with her eyes. Mikana didn’t seem convinced yet either. I could see veins popping out on her head. She was the one who had decided to come along on her own accord, so I would be troubled if she were to misdirect her anger instead. I have never attempted to deceive her into helping me with the request.

“....Well I do understand the situation more or less now. It was our fault for not confirming the contents of the request before accepting it. So how about if we split the tasks so we can finish with this as soon as we can?” [Duke]

Duke concluded the explanation splendidly. There didn’t seem to be any objections to it. It would have been quite troublesome to continue our conversation in the storm whilst being pelted by the rain, so it was of great help when he brought the discussion to a certain direction.

“Then let’s go to the seaside cottage where our client is. I don’t want to get soaked any more than this.” [Youki]

The rest of the members then ran to the cottage to seek shelter after being prompted, along with all their luggage. Upon reaching there, we found someone, who might possibly be our client, waiting there. It was a slightly short spectacled man dressed in Hawaiian shirt with a straw hat over his head. He

called out to us from the counter when he noticed us entering the place all of a sudden.

“.....Welcome. It’s rare to have customers here. The sea’s condition is really bad right now, so I had not expected anyone to come.”

“Please excuse us. We’re actually here for a request. May I know if you are our said client?”

“Is that so? Pardon me. I was the one who issued that request. This is where we operate our business, but you have already seen the condition outside, haven’t you? At this rate we couldn’t even run anything here.” [Manager]

The manager of the seaside cottage sighed when he looked outside. Indeed. It is such a sad sight considering the potential of this resort. If this goes on he would go out of business.

“This is the peak season for customers so, I’d like to get to the bottom of this as soon as possible.....I’m sorry but I’ll be counting on you. There are many vacant rooms available so feel free to choose whichever rooms that you like.” [Manager]

Possibly because he has already relayed whatever that he wanted to, he disappeared behind the counter. I was suddenly reminded of someone when I watched the lonely form of his back. Don’t display that kind of state today, alright Raven?

“It appears that we are free to use any rooms available here. For the time being let’s leave our luggage before continuing our discussion.” [Cecilia]

After Cecilia's words, each of us went around selecting our own rooms to drop off our luggage before resuming our conversation from earlier.

"So, about what we should do from now.....it is written in the request that we need to figure out the main reason to the high waves, storm and heavy rain happening. Since there are three factors here, I have thought of splitting ourselves into three groups." [Youki]

"I'll be in the same one with Cecilia—" [Yuuga]

"Commoner, you don't need me to spell it out, right!?" [Mikana]

"I'll be with Captain, Duke-ani, Happiness-ane, Cecilia-ane and....." [Sheik]

".....Anyone is fine." [Happiness]

Each of them began coming up with their own selfish suggestions as they pleased.

Well, I am guilty of it myself, since I wanted to be in the same group as Cecilia too. The occurrence, however, has left Cecilia and Duke in a state of astonishment that all they could do was just to watch over the happenings until it settled down.

Raven, on the other hand was.....looking alternately between me, Duke and Happiness.

You're sending the message with your eyes since you couldn't voice your thoughts?

If he were to be in the same group as us, he could speak out without reservation. Could that be the reason?

.....No, it might be a different explanation when it comes to Happiness.

At this rate we will never reach a decision. Hence, I called Cecilia and Duke over and formed a circle.

“What should we do?” [Youki]

“Well, I think we would be wasting our time even if we were to go on with the discussion as is.” [Cecilia]

“All of them were just spouting off things as they pleased. It would be better to decide on the groups and complete the request as soon as we can. They can go frolic with whosoever their favourite member is after this is over.” [Duke]

What Cecilia and Duke said was justified. If this were to go on, I have a feeling that we would end up spending the entire day just on group allocation.

“Then let’s decide by drawing lots.” [Youki]

I suggested the fairest method. What Duke said was right. We can just have fun with the person we like after this is over. There is no other choice than to endure it regardless of whom I end up with.

.....So, even if I were to end up in the same group as Yuuga and Mikana, I’ll just have to tough it out patiently.

“I agree.” [Cecilia]

“Me too.” [Duke]

“If Cecilia is fine with it, then I am too!” [Yuuga]

“Uu....it can’t be helped then.” [Mikana]

“That is fine~” [Sheik]

“.....Agree.” [Happiness]

Raven who was displaying his memo with the word 『Agree』 written, was also in agreement. Let’s draw the lots immediately!

To prevent foul play, the lots were made on the spot in the presence of everyone.

Thus, the results of the impartial lots were...

“I am honestly happy....” [Youki]

“There are some places that I am concerned about though.....” [Cecilia]

“Even if this is the result of the lots....is it fine?” [Duke]

Me, Cecilia and Duke, the three individuals who usually keep the tsukkomi under control ended up as the first group.

“.....Best regards.” [Happiness]

“.....I am separated from Yuuga.” [Mikana]

Raven was displaying a memo with the words, 『I look forward to working with you』 written. Although, his face appeared to be twitching, probably because of the growing anxiety within him.

From my point of view, as someone who knew about the circumstances between them, Mikana has now become the third wheel in the second group.

“How could this be.....Cecilia.” [Yuuga]

“Hmmm, so I’m not in the same group with Captain and the rest?.....Well it’s fine then. Best regards~ Do your best, kay~” [Sheik]

Sheik laughed as he slapped the back of Yuuga who was lamenting over the result of the lots.

Yuuga and Sheik, the two people with low mental age formed the third group.
.....Ability wise, it shouldn’t be that one-sided though. On the surface, that is.

“Then, shall we go?” [Youki]

“Wa-wait, one more time.....” [Yuuga]

“We’ll be wasting more time if we were to do it again. It has already been decided, so just accept it if you’re a man.” [Duke]

In a medium bowl, whip egg yolks and 1/4 cup of sugar with an electric mixer until thick and pale.

Duke turned Yuuga down flat when he suggested a do over. Though, if Duke hasn’t said that, I would’ve stopped him by saying the same thing.

The others might be thinking of something similar to Yuuga, but what Duke has just said probably stopped them. At any rate, no do overs are allowed. What we should discuss now is the task delegation to each group.

At the end of the discussion, Cecilia, Duke and I from the first group were assigned to the problem pertaining the high waves.

Mikana, Happiness and Raven from the second group were assigned to the issue relating to the heavy rain, while the other matter with regards to the storm was entrusted to the third group, Yuuga and Sheik.

“Then let’s start off immediately so we can have fun at the sea!” [Youki]

“Youki-san, please don’t forget about the request.....” [Cecilia]

“Aa, sorry. Then let’s start off.....” [Youki]

I felt a pinprick in my heart when Cecilia retorted in amazement. I issued the command once more in a different way so I wouldn’t end up in the same state again.

“Why is the Commoner the one leading us!?.....Good grief, let’s just end this quickly.” [Mikana]

“....I got it.” [Happiness]

Group 2 then set off with Mikana in the lead.

“Then, I guess we should go too.....” [Yuuga]

“Let’s go~” [Sheik]

The third group, consisting of Yuuga, who is experiencing low-tension even now, and Sheik, the innocent one who is at full throttle currently, also kicked off.

“We should go soon too.” [Duke]

“True, we shouldn’t fall behind them as well.” [Cecilia]

“Alright, let’s go!” [Youki]

From my point of view, our team has an outstanding sense of stability, so I was quite relieved. However we should never be negligent. I decided that in my heart as we headed towards our destination.

“.....So, how can we stop the high waves?” [Youki]

We have travelled all the way to the sea, but we still haven’t got a clue on what to do. To start with, we wouldn’t be able to begin this mission if we don’t

first figure out the identity of perpetrator who caused these high waves.

“According to the request.....in the recent years, there have been frequent occurrence whereby the tourists have been discarding garbage into the sea. As a result, the sea became polluted, so the Lord got angry. That is what was written here.” [Duke]

“They’re just reaping what they sow, aren’t they? If they have already found out the cause of it, then they should just deal with it themselves.” [Youki]

Picking up the trash is something that they should be able to do themselves. I don’t think it was even necessary to put up a request for this.

“They seemed to have tried doing it themselves but, the Lord appeared and said that they were a hindrance. That was written in the request.” [Duke]

“He must be angry because they were dumping garbage into the sea. So what could this mean?” [Cecilia]

“I don’t know. Anyway, there is a chance that He might appear if we were to try picking up the trash. Let’s try it.” [Youki]

We began picking up the garbage by the sea. For the time being, all the garbage collected by the three of us was accumulated in one place.

“Fuu, there’s quite a huge amount.” [Youki]

“That’s true. It would have been good if only each of them who uses these are

more environmentally conscious.” [Cecilia]

“It’s just as what Cecilia has said……Wait, it looks like the said Lord has finally made his appearance.” [Youki]

Something jumped out of the sea with great force. An enormous sea serpent?.....No, could it be a sea dragon?

“You humans are incorrigible. You came here to destroy my home again? You goddamn humans!” [Sea Dragon]

Just when I thought that its appearance was quite abrupt, it greeted us with a terrible manner of speaking. It seemed to be considerably angry with humans.

“Please wait. We’re here under the guild request. Could you at least listen to our sto....” [Cecilia]

“Shut up! I will not listen to anything humans say. Leave this place at once!” [Sea Dragon]

It didn’t seem to have the intention to listen to what Cecilia have to say at all. All it wanted was for us to leave the place.

“So you’ll not listen to what humans say....” [Duke]

“It’ll be ignoring what Cecilia said then. Regardless of how much its home was ruined by humans, it has too much blood rushing to its head. Shall I cool its head a little?” [Youki]

“Hmph! What do you humans plan to do with me!? Don’t tell me that you’re planning to fight me?” [Sea Dragon]

The Sea Dragon laughed through its nose. It was being completely cocky. Duke on the other hand appeared to have pulled out his sword, preparing for battle as well.

“Haa, it’ll be useless even if I stop you all, won’t it?” [Cecilia]

Cecilia reluctantly took out her wand and adopted a battle stance too. She must have wanted to settle this peacefully through discussion.

“Captain, there’s nobody around, am I right?” [Duke]

“Nn? Hold on.....I’ve just confirm it but there’s no one around.” [Youki]

By strengthening my sense of smell, I have confirmed that there was no one else around apart from us.

“Then I’ll be taking off my head now after a long time.” [Duke]

Duke unfastened the metal fitting that connected his head to the armour and held his head in one hand.

.....It did say that it would not listen to what humans say, right? If that’s the case, then what about demons?

“I think this is my first time seeing Duke-san removing his head.....” [Cecilia]

“Well, since there was no opportunity for him to show you that.” [Youki]

He couldn't possibly remove his head when he is living in the human society.

“So you're actually a demon? Why is Dullahan together with humans?.....”
[Sea Dragon]

“Aa, I'm sorry but it would be better for you to stop such hypocritical act. Even though you refused to listen to what people have to say, you made them listen to your nonsensical blabbing instead. What you are doing will just make the person listening to you quite irritated.” [Duke]

“What did you say?.....” [Sea Dragon]

“To begin with, even though you were angry because of how humans had ruined your home, why did you create the high waves and drove off the humans who tried to clean up the trash here?.....What are you up to? The sea will remain in a stormy condition because of the high waves you created. What you are doing will certainly cause difficulties for the living creatures in the sea, won't it? Despite that, all you were doing was thinking of yourself, throwing a fit as you like, without considering the consequences. There's a limit to how far you can go with your selfish ways!” [Duke]

Trace two 9 inch circles onto the parchment paper using a cake pan as a guide

Duke's barrage of verbal attacks appeared to have caused the Sea Dragon to shrink back as well. Maybe, we could convince it without needing to fight.....

“S-shut up! Don't be full of yourself just because you're a demon. If you're

bragging that much then prove it by showing me your ability instead!" [Sea Dragon]

The Sea Dragon roared, trying to intimidate us. As expected, the fight is inevitable.

"Cecilia, I'll get serious too. An opponent is an opponent regardless. I would like to end this quick. Duke has wound up this way too." [Youki]

".....I understand. However, the Sea Dragon is also a victim in this. Can you try avoid injuring it as much as possible?" [Cecilia]

She still cared about that Sea Dragon in spite of the way she was treated by it earlier. As expected of Cecilia-san. She's a really kind person.

"I got it. I'll do it accordingly." [Youki]

I regenerated my horn and wings then strengthened my muscle, changing into my demon mode. Balling up my hand into fist, I approached the Sea Dragon in a manner as if I was telling him "Please be prepared~" indirectly.

"Wha-! You're a demon!? Not only the Dullahan there, but you too? Why...."
[Sea Dragon]

"Fuu, it's too late to regret it now! I'll listen to your repentance later. Prepare yourself!" [Youki]

I went into full chuuni mode and flew towards the sea dragon by flapping my

wings.

“Aa~ Captain has flipped his switch. Then I’ll get serious too.” [Duke]

Duke invoked his intermediate dark magic, 《Poltergeist》. It’s a magic that is able to make objects float and control it freely. Duke’s sword and head floated in the air.

“Iya, this feels nostalgic. I’ve been fighting with sword only recently.” [Duke]

“We’re not doing this for fun. Hurry up and bash this Sea Dragon!” [Youki]

“I got it!” [Duke]

Duke and I flew around, avoiding the Sea Dragon’s attack completely while boldly giving damage and occasionally launching straightforward attacks on it. Our perfect combinations caused my tension to skyrocket. It has been a long time since Duke unleashed his full strength too so he appeared to be having fun.

Gradually whisk in the heavy cream.

At the end of the battle, the Sea Dragon fell into the water with a huge splash, probably because it had reached its limit.

“Youki-san, have you forgotten what I’ve said earlier!?” [Cecilia]

Cecilia’s retorts resounded many times during the battle.

“Gunune, it’s my loss.” [Sea Dragon]

“Greatness is comparative. Even if you think that you’re great, there will always be someone out there who will be better than you.” [Duke]

“Will you listen to what we have to say now?” [Youki]

What we have done might make us look perfectly like a pair of villains now if anyone were to witness this scene from the sidelines. Even though I did understand that we should try settling this peacefully as much as possible, I ended up going overboard.

“Youki-san, Duke-san, you two have overdone it.” [Cecilia]

Cecilia used recovery magic on the Sea Dragon.

“Human. Why, did you use recovery magic on....” [Sea Dragon]

“No. It is still a fact that you’re the victim in this.....Didn’t I tell you two not to be so extreme in the fight.” [Cecilia]

Cecilia smiled wryly as she looked at me and Duke.

Duke was making an earnest apology while I was apologizing with all my strength.

I am currently reflecting on it. It was my fault for getting carried away and

breaking what I have agreed with her.

“.....A promise is a promise. I’ll listen to what you have to say.” [Sea Dragon]

“Thank you very much! So.....” [Cecilia]

Cecilia then made her request to the sea dragon so he could quell the high waves. Of course, we promised that we would caution the tourists against dirtying the place and explained that there would be people cleaning up the sea and beach periodically from now on. Unlike what happened earlier, the Sea Dragon was listening to what Cecilia was saying intently.

“Then, clean up all the trash here for now. I’ll quell this wave once this place is all cleaned up.....What that Dullahan there said was right. I might be causing problems for the creatures living in the sea too.” [Sea Dragon]

The Sea Dragon cast a glance at Duke as it agreed to the conditions in a somewhat reluctant way. After acknowledging the conditions proposed, Cecilia went off to inform the management in the matter with regard to the implementation of the rule to warn the tourists, and also about cleaning up of the sea while Duke and I collected the garbage around the area.

Spread half of the filling mixture over the first ladyfinger round in the pan.

It soon dawned on us that it was already night time after we grouped up with Cecilia and finished with the clean-up.

“I wouldn’t say that it’s completely clean now but....well, this should be fine. I will quell the waves for now but, I will be appearing once more if the sea becomes dirty again.” [Sea Dragon]

“If that happens, I’ll be your opponent again.” [Youki]

“That’s not it.” [Cecilia]

wham

The sound reverberated inside my head as I held onto it. The feeling almost made me pass out in agony. I seemed to have received a hit from Cecilia’s wand as a retort.

“There’s no choice other than to let the people here know to take extra precautions so this does not happen again.” [Duke]

“Yes, that’s right.” [Cecilia]

“I’ll be going now. I would like it to be in a different way the next time we meet.” [Sea Dragon]

The Sea Dragon then disappeared into the vast sea after leaving such parting words. Thereupon, the violent sea waves became calm.

“.....With this, we have cleared our quota, haven’t we?” [Duke]

“Aa, that’s right.” [Youki]

I had wanted to strike a cool pose but, the storm and heavy rain were getting in my way. We have done quite a lot today, to the extent of wearing even

raincoats to pick up trash around. Nonetheless, the storm is still blowing and the heavy rain has yet to stop. Rather, I have the feeling that the storm and rain were even stronger than when we came over earlier.

“It appears that Raven and the rest were not able to clear it by the end of the day.” [Youki]

“.....It seems so. We still have time for this so let's go back to the seaside cottage for now.” [Cecilia]

“That's true.” [Duke]

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Since there was no reason for us to be outside anymore, we returned to the seaside cottage but.....

“.....Did something happen?” [Youki]

As soon as we entered, Raven immediately lowered his head as he passed us a memo with the word 『Sorry』 written on it. We wouldn't have any idea on what he meant without first listening to the circumstances so Duke and I pulled Raven to a suitable private room instead.

“We wouldn't know what had happened even if you were to say 『Sorry』 all of a sudden.....Does it have something to do with the rain and storm becoming stronger?” [Duke]

“.....Yes. We are not able to stop it at all even though I was there.” [Raven]

“What really happened?” [Youki]

Raven began explaining the events that happened today after Duke and I probed him.

After we were divided into groups, Mikana pulled Raven and Happiness to the location experiencing the strongest winds.

Aren't we in charge of the heavy rain issue? Why are we heading to the place experiencing the strongest wind instead? All those thoughts were going through Raven's mind at that time, but since his papers got soaked by the rain, he wasn't able to converse with her. Happiness had not said anything either, so they ended up being dragged off by Mikana to a place that seemed to be where the Spirit of Rain and Wind is.

“.....There were two women floating in the sky having a heated argument.”
[Raven]

“That must be frightening.” [Duke]

“They may be spirits but a quarrel between women is scary.” [Youki]

Raven who came to the conclusion that the heavy rain and storm were caused by the fight between the two spirits tried to stop them. Nonetheless neither spirits would listen at all.

It seemed that they had joined up with Yuuga and Sheik's group when they were at a loss on what to do at that time. However, what baffled them was that the two of them appeared to be in a cheerful and euphoric state for some

reason.

“.....Yuuga looked incredibly crestfallen when we took off earlier. So when we noticed him looking bright and chirpy, we were dumbfounded.” [Raven]

“That must be because of Sheik, isn’t it?” [Duke]

“Yeah it must be Sheik.” [Youki]

I’m sure Sheik’s cheerfulness must have been transmitted to him when they were together.

Seeing that their mental age is quite close, it might be possible that he was drawn by Sheik’s rhythm.

Anyway, that troublemaker, seemingly brave Yuuga then attempted to persuade the spirits.

At first, just like Raven and the rest, he was ignored by the two spirits.

Nonetheless, after he gradually displayed the speciality of a hero to the fullest, the end result was.....

“.....Before we knew it, the two spirits began fighting for Yuuga instead and the brawl ended up becoming even more violent.” [Raven]

Our mouths were agape after we listened to Raven’s story.

It was just, too ridiculous. The original plan was to pacify them, so why did he

intensify their fight?!

“So, eventually you returned without stopping the fight then? Did you even know what we have gone through?! Not only did we have to persuade the Sea Dragon, we have been picking up garbage the whole day!” [Duke]

“Calm down, Duke.....Raven, where’s the culprit who has increased the commotion?” [Youki]

“.....Everyone noticed it when Youki returned just now. So, he probably went to Cecilia’s place.” [Raven]

Upon hearing that, I ran out of the room as fast as I could. I strengthened my legs’ strength to the limit and ran towards the destination with all my might.

Since I had strengthened my body as well when I was collecting garbage earlier, I didn’t realize that all my body parts were already screaming in pain.

I cancelled my strengthening magic just before I reached the place and grasped my fist, preparing myself to strike him down. Just as what Raven has said, Yuuga was together with Cecilia.

“Youuu basstarrd!!” [Youki]

“Uwaaa~ wh-what!?” [Yuuga]

The straight right punch that I threw with all of my body was regrettably evaded. However, I wasn’t as kind to let it end just like this.

‘A game of tag’ then broke out when I started pursuing Yuuga as I wasn’t

contented that my first hit missed him. But it finally ended after I was soothed by Cecilia. The first day eventually came to a close with the slapstick event.

The next day, Yuuga, who wanted to bear the responsibility alone, took off in an enthusiastic state to persuade the spirits once again.

Honestly, I have a bad feeling about this.

Nevertheless, everyone was already overwhelmed by fatigue after yesterday's incidents and Yuuga had stubbornly refused to heed our words to the bitter end as well, taking off by himself.

Therefore, with exception of Yuuga, everyone got a day off and enjoyed their holiday respectively.

Cecilia was going around the places to discuss with the locals on the matter pertaining to the beach clean-up, as well as their plans from now on.

I guess it must be because she wanted to properly fulfil her promise with the Sea Dragon. When I suggested to come along with her, she gently declined me, asking me to take my time to rest today.

Mikana was worried about Yuuga hence she followed him in secret when he left earlier. Do your best so you're not exposed!

Duke and Sheik had gone out to shop for souvenirs happily while Happiness and Raven, just the two of them, were just sitting in the corridor.

It was unclear as to whom was the one who took the initiative to invite the

other party.

The wind chime resounded in the corridor, enabling one to feel the atmosphere.....not.

Since the wind outside was strong, it was actually causing the wind chime to produce an irritatingly loud noise, destroying the romantic ambience.

Who would be the one to initiate the conversation? I tried observing them but neither of them opened their mouths till the end.

Seeing that all I could hear was the sound of that irritatingly loud wind chime, I wandered away from the spot.

“Ah.....” [Youki]

Just as I was ambling around, wondering on what I should do, I ran into Kyou, the manager of the seaside cottage, and also the one who had helped with the lots preparation yesterday.

“It seems that the matter about the waves was resolved. Thank you.” [Kyou]

“Aa, the problems pertaining to the storm and heavy rain have yet to be resolved though.” [Youki]

“....If it's you guys, I believe that you all can do it.” [Kyou]

For now, we're depending on Yuuga for that. Kyou must have wanted this to be settled as soon as possible, in a management-like sense.

To make the syrup, stir together 1 cup sugar, boiling water, coffee and 1/4 cup rum.

Quickly persuade those spirits soon, Hero.

“By the way, what’s that?” [Youki]

Several life buoys could be seen installed in the vicinity of the seaside cottage’s entrance. Those weren’t there when we first came here.

“I believe that you guys would definitely be able to complete this request successfully so I’m preparing for the reopening.” [Kyou]

“No well, even if you said preparation.....how is it related to those life buoys?” [Youki]

“.....I can’t swim.” [Kyou]

Kyou has made an unexpected declaration.

“Are you serious?.....” [Youki]

“If any tourists were to be on the verge of drowning, I couldn’t help them even if I wanted to. So, all these life buoys are necessary.” [Kyou]

Kyou picked up one of the life buoys.

“You’re going to rescue the people by swimming using a life buoy?” [Youki]

“No.....I’ll throw this to the drowning tourists and pull them ashore. For that reason, I have been working out to build my muscle so I could throw it as far as I

could. I have taken the impact of wind into consideration as well and practiced it over and over again. I have confidence that I would be able to throw this accurately even in this storm and heavy rain.” [Kyou]

“Instead of putting all those efforts in throwing the life buoys, you should just learn how to swim!” [Youki]

What kind of special skill is this? This is not a ring toss. 1So all those muscles hidden underneath his Hawaiian shirt were developed for the sake of throwing those life buoys?

“.....I, can’t swim.” [Kyou]

“.....I got it. My bad.” [Youki]

Since he was hanging his head, looking downcast, I apologized. As expected, the aura he emitted was similar to Raven’s.

I might be able to make an interesting discovery if I were to continue the conversation.

Possibly because Kyou was also looking for someone to talk to, we ended up chatting until Yuuga returned.

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“.....I’m sorry, Cecilia. And everyone else too.” [Yuuga]

When Yuuga returned, he lowered his head as soon as all the members were gathered.

It seemed that he had failed. When I was checking the condition outside just a while ago, I realized that the storm and heavy rain have gotten even worse.

“Oi. You definitely added fuel to the fire, didn’t you?” [Youki]

“The condition outside is dangerous now. Rather, will this place be alright? I can hear an unpleasant creaking sound.” [Duke]

“.....Uneasy.” [Happiness]

“I think I was almost blown away by the wind when I was walking outside~” [Sheik]

Raven showed us a memo. 『The wind chime has become too noisy, so Kyou has taken it down.』 Considering the strength of the storm, that was natural. Actually, could it be that it was blown off by the wind instead?

“Hero-sama should stay back. We will be the one negotiating with them the next time.” [Cecilia]

“No way! I can’t allow Cecilia and the rest of you face something that dangerous.” [Yuuga]

I guess Yuuga has something that he couldn’t give in as well. It appears that he didn’t want to just leave everything to us. However, what this guy has done was just making it even more complicated.

“.....Alright, I got a good idea. I’ll be going there with Hero-kun tomorrow to

persuade them.” [Youki]

“Hold it! Why are you addressing Yuuga as Hero-kun even though you’re just a Commoner?” [Mikana]

“You have already wasted one whole day. There’s nothing you can say about that, right?” [Youki]

I ignored Mikana and directed the question at Yuuga.

After showing a slight gesture as if he was giving it a thought, he nodded.

“.....I understand. Everyone might be thinking of the same thing but there’s a time limit for this. I’ll try staking it on you.” [Yuuga]

“Alright. So it’ll be tomorrow then.” [Youki]

Since Yuuga has agreed on it, Mikana wasn’t able to say anything anymore. The meeting then dissolved.

“.....Will it be alright?” [Cecilia]

Cecilia was still feeling uneasy about the idea that I have in mind.

.....Could you have some faith in me?

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The next day, after being guided by Yuuga, we finally reached the place where the Spirit of Rain and Wind is.

“Why do you always like the same thing as me!?” [Wind Spirit]

“.....That’s my line! Could you stop copying me?!” [Rain Spirit]

“Hah!? You’re the one copying me, aren’t you?!” [Wind Spirit]

“...That’s wrong. You’re the one!” [Rain Spirit]

There’s nothing scarier than a fight between women. The wind and rain became stronger each time they clashed with each other. This felt like a tempest.

“Alright. Now’s your turn. Just repeat what I’ve said to them.” [Youki]

“I-I got it.” [Yuuga]

The two spirits noticed it when Yuuga took a step towards them.

“Ara, did you come to see me again?” [Wind Spirit]

“.....You came to see me, right?” [Rain Spirit]

The look on their faces suddenly became of maidens in love. I guess I must be invisible to them. Yuuga is the only one in their eyes now. Alright, it'll be a match from here. I whispered to Yuuga.

"I'm here to apologize to the both of you." [Youki]

"I'm here to apologize to the both of you." [Yuuga]

""Eh?"" [Rain & Wind Spirit]

"It wasn't possible for me to choose between you two." [Youki]

"It wasn't possible for me to choose between you two." [Yuuga]

"Why is that? Are you saying that I'm the same rank as her?!" [Wind Spirit]

"...That's mean." [Rain Spirit]

The Wind Spirit was enraged while the Rain Spirit looked dejected.

It pains me to do this too but this is for the sake of the request. I continued whispering to Yuuga.

"That's because I'm a hero so it wasn't possible for me to choose just one person." [Youki]

"That's because I'm a hero so it wasn't possible for me to choose just one

person.” [Yuuga]

“So you are a hero then.” [Wind Spirit]

“...That is understandable.” [Rain Spirit]

“I know that it was inexcusable of me. I have stolen both of your hearts.”
[Youki]

“I know that it was inexcusable of me. I have stolen both of your hearts.”
[Yuuga]

Their faces became bright red. As expected of Yuuga. He was able to make them blush even with such terrible lines. But, it's high time for me to finish this.

“So, I'll take responsibility for it.” [Youki]

“So, I'll take responsibility for it.” [Yuuga]

“T-That is of course.” [Wind Spirit]

“.....” [Rain Spirit]

The Wind Spirit turned her face away while the Rain Spirit was sending a gaze filled with anticipation in silence.

“I'm sorry for deceiving you two. Please feel free to hit me as much as you

like!” [Youki]

“I’m sorry for deceiving you two. Please feel free to hit me as much as you like!.....Eh!?” [Yuuga]

The place became engulfed in an unnatural silence. Why are the spirits stunned too?! The storm and rain suddenly stopped at that moment. Could it be that their souls have been pulled out of their body?

“Wait a minute! What did you just make me say?!” [Yuuga]

Yuuga tried to grab at me but I dodged him easily.

“No well, everything will be settled with this, right?” [Youki]

I was not expecting him to repeat after me without any hesitation.

Honestly, it was just a fifty-fifty probability to me so I didn’t think that he would really say it.

“No it’s not about it being settled or not!” [Yuuga]

“Oi, behind, behind you.” [Youki]

“Eh?.....” [Yuuga]

When Yuuga turned back, the pair of really furious Wind and Rain Spirits was standing behind him. I could feel a tremendous amount of magic power coming

from them. Seeing that it's Yuuga, he should be able to endure it. He's a hero after all.

"Terrible, you're terrible...." [Wind Spirit]

".....Unforgivable." [Rain Spirit]

I secretly snuck away from Yuuga so I wouldn't get involved in it. Rest assured. Even if they beat the hell out of you, I could use my recovery magic to patch you up immediately.

"No, wait a minu-" [Yuuga]

Without waiting for Yuuga, who was still rooted to the spot to finish what he was saying, the magic from the two spirits were combined, becoming a small energy that held great power before turning into a tempest.

That enormous magic then hit Yuuga..... That was what I thought when it suddenly changed direction at the last moment.

The place where it was re-directed was where I am standing.

"It's a lie isn't, it!?" [Youki]

The moment I was hit by the tempest, a strong tornado built up, engulfing just my body. Then I was blown off.

As I wasn't able to defend myself in time, I ended up receiving damage and then landed on the sandy beach in a pathetic way. When I looked up at Yuuga and the rest, they were somehow enveloped in a calm atmosphere.

“Why.....” [Yuuga]

“It should be the loss of the one who wound up falling in love so, attacking you might be going too far.....” [Wind Spirit]

“.....Me too. I thought it was not right at the end.” [Rain Spirit]

“I see. You two are actually good friends, aren’t you? Otherwise, both of you wouldn’t be able to unleash that kind of attack.” [Yuuga]

The Wind and Rain Spirit exchanged look with each other. Then they turned towards Yuuga and nodded.

“I knew it. In other words, your relationship is actually close enough to argue with each other. But, there’s a limit to it so please reflect on yourselves. Both of you are powerful so your fight will impact the surrounding.” [Yuuga]

“....True.” [Wind Spirit]

“....I’m sorry.” [Rain Spirit]

“It’s good as long as you two understand it. Fighting amongst yourselves is fine but do it in moderation.” [Yuuga]

The Wind and Rain Spirit nodded and held hands with each other before flying up.

“You must come again, okay? We might fight again if you don’t!” [Wind Spirit]

“.....Come and play again.” [Rain Spirit]

“Un. I will come again. Definitely.” [Yuuga]

The scene unfolded before me resembles a certain, refreshingly youthful story that came to a beautiful end.

Rather, was I being neglected until the end? I should be able to recover once I cast recovery magic on myself but I ended up witnessing the course of events unintentionally.

The combination attack from the two spirits was stronger than I thought. I lost my consciousness at the point when Yuuga was waving at the spirits. 2

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“Wha?” [Youki]

When I came to, I found myself on a bed. What I last remember was me fainting on the beach. So why am I here?

“Finally, you woke up.”

Facing towards where the sound came from, I found Cecilia there, sitting on a chair. She seemed to be reading a book.

“Eh, I am.....” [Youki]

“Hero-sama carried Youki-san back. He was angry, you know? 『He almost had me.』 That was what he said when he came back.” [Cecilia]

“Uge....” [Youki]

Well, I was prepared for it though. Rather, it was even more harsh for me to find out that Yuuga was the one who carried me back. I owe him now.

“Seriously, what I was concern about has indeed came true.” [Cecilia]

“.....Sorry.” [Youki]

It would be a good plan as long as it ends well.....that was what I wanted to say but, I couldn't bring myself to say it under such atmosphere.

“But, we did safely complete the request thanks to Youki-san.” [Cecilia]

“Seriously? So....” [Youki]

I got up and made my way towards window in the room. The instant it was opened, I was immediately greeted by a pleasant view. A cloudless blue sky stretched into the distant horizon whilst the palpitating pulse of the sea was steady and peaceful.

“Alright-!!” [Youki]

The request was accomplished.....In other words, I can have fun at the beach now!

“Youki-san, what’s wrong?.....Why did you raise your voice all of a sudden.”
[Cecilia]

“No, I was just thinking that we could have a whole day of fun now.” [Youki]

“.....We’ll be going back tomorrow though?” [Cecilia]

“Eh?” [Youki]

“Youki-san has been sleeping the whole day since yesterday.” [Cecilia]

“You’re kidding, aren’t you.....” [Youki]

I collapsed into the bed. How much damage did I receive to have caused me to lose my consciousness for an entire day?!

However, if we will be going back tomorrow then Cecilia’s presence here could only mean one thing.

“Cecilia, were you here the entire time today?” [Youki]

“.....Disregarding the method used, the one who completed this quest was Youki-san. So it’s not right to leave Youki-san here alone while I go enjoy myself.

Well, Hero-sama has invited me countless times though.” [Cecilia]

“.....What’s the time now?” [Youki]

“It’s already early afternoon.....Is there anything wrong?” [Cecilia]

I jumped out of bed and rummaged through my luggage, taking out all the things that I had brought over for the purpose of having fun at the beach.

“Youki-san, could it be that.....” [Cecilia]

I turned towards Cecilia and laughed all of a sudden.

“Let’s go play now!” [Youki]

I grasped Cecilia’s hand and ran out of the room.

“Wai-, Youki-san, we’re going now? Not to mention, you have just woken up.....” [Cecilia]

“It’ll be alright. Who do you think I am? Cecilia is actually looking forward to having fun at the beach as well, right? You’ve even prepared the swimsuit. Hurry up and go change.” [Youki]

“.....I understand. I would like to cut loose for a bit too.” [Cecilia]

After changing, Cecilia and I put on our parkas and ran towards to beach.

“Captain, you’re late.” [Duke]

“Morning Captain. You finally woke up~?” [Sheik]

Duke was wearing a wetsuit to hide his necks’ portion. Are you planning to go diving? The sight of his swimwear made me feel like making that remark.

Sheik on the other hand was wearing a parka to cover up his wings. It’s a trunks type swimwear.

“Ara, Commoner, so you’ve woken up? Tricking Yuuga is a heavy sin, you know.” [Mikana]

“Seriously.....” [Yuuga]

Mikana was wearing a bikini while Yuuga was wearing an ordinary swimming trunks. Seeing that they looked drenched, they must have swum in the sea already.

Happiness could be seen sitting on the beach, grasping her knees as she looked at the sea from under the parasol.

Following her line of sight, I could see Raven pleasantly doing a long-distance swimming.

.....You should just invite her for a swim together, Raven. No, it might be possible that they wouldn’t be able to endure the silence if he were to invite her.

“Are those tourists? There are people coming here every now and then though.” [Youki]

“They’re locals. It seems that they are here to enjoy themselves, considering that the problems with regard to the weather and waves have been resolved. There was a commotion in the beginning, but Kyou-san has brought the matter to a close.” [Cecilia]

“I see.” [Youki]

Kyou must have an unexpected influence among the locals.

“Help! There’s a child drowning—!!”

An adult’s cry for help could be heard all of a sudden.

Upon looking out over the sea, a boy could be seen struggling in the water to stay afloat. He had probably gotten a sudden cramp in his leg.

Yuuga and I began running that way to help but, before we could do so, something flew over our heads towards the drowning boy. It was.....a life buoy with a rope attached.

Where the life buoy was thrown was right on target, as it landed perfectly centered around the boy.

“Caught you!”

Kyou’s voice resounded. The boy clung to the life buoy as Kyou steadily pulled

the rope and hauled him ashore, rescuing him safely. Possibly because all the locals were aware of it, they broke out in praise, “As expected of Kou-san!”

Aside from the locals, I was the only one who knew about it after listening to Kyou’s story. Cecilia and rest, however, had no information about it at all. All of them were stunned when they looked at Kyou.

“.....What just happened, a while ago?”

“Perhaps, an expert technique of quoit?”

It could only be seen as that by any bystanders. In a sense, it was actually more amazing than a swimming rescue.

“You’ve finally woken up.....Thanks to you, I was able to avoid bankruptcy. I’m grateful to you. This is a service from me.” [Kyou]

Kyou who had finished his work dropped by with shaved ices³ for all of us.

“Ou, thank you.” ⁴ [Youki]

“Thank you very much.” [Cecilia]

“Wai~” [Sheik]

“Let’s eat!” [Duke]

“You’re not being tactful.” [Mikana]

“Cecilia, if you don’t mind, shall we eat it toge.....buwa-!?” [Yuuga]

I thrust all my shaved ice into Yuuga’s mouth since he was about to make a stupid suggestion. He held his head as he crouched down. It appeared that he was experiencing brain freeze.

By the way, Happiness took two of the shaved ices and waved her hand at Raven. Upon seeing that, Raven began swimming here in a hurry, but the distance that he needed to cover was quite far. Would Raven make it in time, or would the ices melt before he reached here?

“It’s my treat. Kyou, I’m sorry but could you give me another cup? I’ll be paying for that.” [Youki] 5

“Got it.” [Kyou]

Kyou returned to the seaside cottage and brought me a new shaved ice.

“Youki-san.....” [Cecilia]

“Well, with this we’ll be even now after yesterday’s event.” [Youki]

I finished my shaved ice at a pace whereby I would not get a brain freeze. Then I took Cecilia’s hand in mine and dashed towards the sea.

Yuuga who has recovered from his cold-stimulus headache could be seen chasing after us from behind with Mikana on his tail.

“Alright, we’ll be playing until nightfall-!” [Youki]

“Haa, I guess it can’t be helped. I’ll keep you company today for as long as my stamina permits.” [Cecilia]

On that day, I ended up having a barrel of fun, forgetting just about everything else.

Incidentally, I was greeted by another unexpected scene when I returned to the inn. I wasn’t sure if it was because of Gai’s altered appearance, but the yandere smile on Tiel-chan’s face sent chills down my spine. The coldness I experienced in my body was far worse than what the shaved ice had made me feel.

Footnotes

1. In case you don’t know what a ring toss is -> [image](#)
2. He had forgotten to heal himself so the impact finally kicked in.
3. Called Kakigoriかき氷= [Japanese shaved ice dessert](#)
4. This line is in English.
5. Youki had shoved his first shaved ice into Yuuga’s mouth.